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Re/Reading Paulo Freire & Lorenzo Milani:

Critical Pedagogies for the 21st Century

A Dissertation Presented

by

SIMONE MARIA GUGLIOTTA

Submitted to the
Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts Amherst
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2019

College of Education

Language, Literacy, and Culture Concentration

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Re/Reading Paulo Freire & Lorenzo Milani:
Critical Pedagogies for the 21st Century

A Dissertation Presented

By

SIMONE MARIA GUGLIOTTA

Approved as to style and content by:

Maria José Botelho, Chair

Theresa Austin, Member

Claudio Moreira, Member

Roberto Ludovico, Member

Jennifer Randall
Associate Dean of Academic Affairs
College of Education

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, friends and students
from around the world, who together, form one nation.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The journey of writing a dissertation using ethnographic case studies has moments of great euphoria generated by frenetic activities such as finding contacts, visiting varied locations, meeting and observing new people, and being observed. Subsequently, a researcher does much talking, listening, responding, learning, teaching, understanding, not belonging, then belonging, so much of which is hard to leave behind. After all the positive turmoil of chasing ideas in the field, a needed quiet period arrives in order to delve into the vast amount of collected data and readings to build something anew.

Saudade (a feeling similar to longing) also occurs while listening to other students' and educators' voices. In my case, a feeling of being accompanied by Freire's and Milani's legacy helped me stay focused through the building of a conversation between them and (hopefully) future readers of my work. Now I must also look back and acknowledge and express how important people were in this long process.

I start with a big *muito obrigada* (thank you very much in Portuguese) to Maria José Botelho, my mentor during my program of study in Language, Literacy, and Culture (LLC) and the chair of my committee. I am grateful for her guidance through the many possibilities of study in the critical literacy field. Deconstructing, problematizing, and rebuilding understandings of old and new ideas in a critical manner together helped me to re/read the world and re/visit the lives and minds of Paulo Freire and Lorenzo Milani.

I would like to say *muchas gracias* to Theresa Austin, also a wonderful mentor, not only for being on my committee, but for introducing me to the study of multilingualism and heritage language. She taught me how to build the strength to be a

researcher who stays in touch with communities to help preserve languages, cultures, and memories. Her critical mind and insightful questions were and always will be great motivations.

A very loud *grazie mille* goes to Roberto Ludovico for joining the committee and for the years as my first mentor in the graduate school master's program. I will be always thankful for his great inspiration to help me not give up during difficult times and to pursue a PhD. I admire his kindness, sophisticated humor, and commitment to helping his students to believe in themselves.

Another *muito obrigada* to Claudio Moreira for being on my committee and for his great inquiring attitude about my research interests during our conversations. I was particularly proud to participate in such a liberating and progressive class with a conational professor. It was in his class where I was first introduced to Performance Ethnography.

This study exists only due to the generosity of students, educators, workers, and principals from two public schools in Brazil and Italy. They will remain unnamed in order to respect privacy commitments with the students and schools, but they know who they are! This project also exists because of the kindness of Edoardo Martinelli, Ira Shor, and Giovanni Banchi. They dedicated many hours answering e-mails, speaking with me, and meeting in person.

I am grateful for my professors and friendships from the LLC Program, and also for the writing groups that we formed along the way. Margaret Felis, Jasmine Robinson, Yvone Fariño, Marsha Jing-Ji Liaw, Shingi Kawamitsu, and Hyunsook Shin: thank you

for your insights, articles, laughter, and even some tears. All inspired me in the writing process and made me feel less lonely during this journey.

I also want to thank everyone else who helped me directly or indirectly. I will mention some here but know I will miss many: L'Tanya Robinson, Kyra Andersen, Elena Langdon, Tatiana Ribeiro, Maria Pia Zinni, Giordano Iapalucci, Elio Iapalucci, Marguerite Harrison, Malcolm McNee, Ero Silva, Giovanna Bellesia, Maria Succihempstead, Anna Botta, Guido Reverdito, Cristiano Mazzei, Euripedes Oliveira, Elsa Petit, Lorenzo Sorbo, Antonella Sisto, Michael DiPasquale, Roland Merullo, and Ken Stow. And for the joy of putting in motion one of my project findings, designing multimodal and multidisciplinary classes that combine Romance languages, critical pedagogy, linguistics, and heritage language, thank you to Giovanna Bellesia (again), Luiz Amaral, and Cara Takajian.

I am also grateful for my mother Maria Gugliotta and siblings Sandra, Rosangela, and Alex's support. And Chris Matera, my husband, deserves a great big thank you for (nearly) unwavering support and patience. I appreciate his interest in Freire's and Milani's ideas, even citing them in heated conversations on politics and critical consciousness with friends and family. His lovely framed picture of a cat barely hanging onto a rope by a single paw with the saying "hang in there" was a remarkable gift, not only because I love cats, but because of its encouragement to keep going. I will be always grateful for his love, for some editing help, and for closing the door during his weekend guitar practices.

ABSTRACT

RE/READING PAULO FREIRE & LORENZO MILANI:
CRITICAL PEDAGOGIES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

MAY 2019

SIMONE MARIA GUGLIOTTA, B.A., UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DO RIO DE
JANEIRO AND UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL FLUMINENSE

M.A.T., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Ph.D., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Professor Maria José Botelho

Philosophers and practitioners of education Paulo Freire (Brazil, 1921-1997) and Lorenzo Milani (Italy, 1923-1967) promulgated pioneering theories and practices akin to critical, multiple, and multimodal literacies pedagogies, and social justice. Although they were contemporaries, Milani and Freire neither met nor exchanged their views on education. This study explores the influence of their pedagogies in two public schools in Brazil and Italy. In addition, it facilitates a dialogue between the two educators' work, as well as among those who either worked with them or are aligned with their philosophies. Nietzsche's concept of genealogy is combined with the discourse and power theories of Foucault, Gee, and Janks, and these interwoven dialogues are augmented with a narrative approach in the process of analyzing interviews. For data collection, I spoke with scholars and practitioners who worked with Freire and Milani, and documented observations made during extensive visits to Milani- and Freire-inspired schools. This project combines case studies and ethnography methodologies. It also employs art-based representation and performance ethnography in the literature review through an imaginary exchange of letters both between the two educators, and between me and them. In my role as both researcher

and participant, I have investigated the ways that Freire's and Milani's pedagogies foster critical consciousness in these school communities.

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CHAPTER 1

RE/VISITING FREIRE AND MILANI: AN INTRODUCTION

Tutti gli usi della parola a tutti' mi sembra un buon motto, dal bel suono democratico. Non perché tutti siano artisti, ma perché nessuno sia schiavo.

All the uses of the word for all seems like a good motto to me, with a great democratic sound. Not because everyone is an artist, but so that nobody should become a slave.

- G. Rodari (1973)

This research project stems from my desire to understand present-day school practices, including the application of the approaches of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1921-1997) and Italian priest-teacher Don Lorenzo Milani (1923-1967) and their connections to critical consciousness and social change. In this study, I present my preliminary findings on their scholarship of critical pedagogies and their significance for the 21st Century, suggesting a new framework that combines both of their philosophies of education, expanded with ideas from other radical pedagogues.

I was also inspired by my disappointment that such great contemporary and like-minded educators never met. They were contemporaries, and their thinking was aligned. I tried to minimize this omission and demonstrate how relevant their philosophies still are by visiting people and places influenced by them, exploring the ways they restore and reinvent their ideas and, through an exercise of creating an imaginary exchange of letters to and between them. Their legacy in the 21st century can be seen as an important and critical tool to inspire social change in the educational pathways of the current world.

Though Paulo Freire is more well-known and well-studied in the field of

education, Milani's ideas and school practices have grown since 2017 on the 50th anniversary of his passing. The 20th anniversary of Freire's passing was also celebrated in 2017. Both educators were intensively active in the 1950's and the 1960s. They worked to help fight for fair school systems, effective approaches for teachers, access to voting, and voting consciously such as questioning repressive situations throughout the world. They saw literacy as a critical tool for opposing dominance and injustice. They believed that learning how to read, write, and consequently, to speak well should be for all, and not just for the few.

I try to show that it is not too late to harness the critical consciousness possibilities of their philosophies and affirm that their contributions to education are living sociopolitical consciousness philosophies that can be applied in both formal and informal settings of learning and teaching, and not just in early education settings or adult literacy programs.

I listened to people who worked with Freire and Milani, as well as to educators who apply their approaches both in the classroom and in their work with their colleagues. It is not a matter of copying a specific Freirean or Milanian methodology, but of reinventing and reinterpreting their thoughts, adapting them to different education settings and social-economic realities.

In exploring the writing of both educators, I see the potential cultural disruption that could create the practices of teaching in hegemonic ways of seeing and thinking and that recognizes educators of all levels of schooling as transformative intellectuals (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000, p. 285). Due the great variety of data for this construct,

this work is in some levels inspired by a bricolage methodology, but consistently based in ethnography as an epistemology, a way of knowing. It includes testimonials and practical examples of students, elementary and middle teachers, school coordinators, college instructors, and educators from community, and associations settings. As a result, I interweave Freire's and Milani's legacies with the work of 16 participants who enact critical pedagogies in their everyday work and/or study life.

My positionality and identity

In the years of visits for data collection, my identity and positionality were an important element for creating connections and for reflecting on the similarities and differences of the education contexts of three countries – Brazil, Italy, and United States. As a researcher-participant born in Brazil from Italian parents, I was also interested in bringing together, in this research, the two great scholars who have inspired me as an educator.

I am currently a college instructor, but I am a journalist by formation, I was an elementary and a language teacher, and worked for a long time in both professions but the call for education was stronger and more urgent. Today, the work as a college instructor and community organizer for bilingual groups are in the center of my heart and mind. When I moved to the United States, already as an adult, the decision of returning to school to pursue a master's and a PhD degree was comforting and gave me the confidence to start a new life in a new country.

For that reason, Freire and Milani are, in many ways, so meaningful to me: through education I can find my voice and my space in the world. The world can be a

beautiful book but of little use if we cannot read it, as once written by Italian writer Carlo Goldoni in his play *La Pamela* (1750) inspired by Galileo Galilei in his book *Il Saggiatore* (Galileo et al., 2005).

Both educators were also great proponents of multilingualism and multiculturalism. Freire for all the world trips and international exposition that the exile gave to him, and Milani by his cultural privilege and access through formal and informal education and his great appreciation for language learning. Being a daughter of immigrant parents somehow also gave me also the curiosity and the possibility of cross countries, cultures, and styles and to expose myself to the complexities, fluidity, and benefits of being in-between places, exploring insider/outsider positionalities as I conducted my research.

As Denzin (2010) states about the work of communitarian journalists and ethnographers, our obligation is to show how our performative skills, interpretive methods, and models of truth, knowledge, and politics can serve to interrupt, disrupt, and intervene in the course of political events as they are unfolding (p.126). Reflecting on this statement, I believe that my background as a multicultural “in-between” person with my mind and heart in three geographical locations, along with my experience as a former reporter and current ethnographer, have served me well. Like Anzaldúa (1987), I embrace the possibility of being on any shore, rather than choosing one.

Through this study, self-reflection, and observations in different layers of education settings, I came to a better understanding of critical literacy and critical pedagogy, and their intimate relation. Critical literacy relates with the ways that we read

the world. It is as a social action through language from which one can embrace the capacity and opportunity of knowing the words, texts, discourses by rethinking them and discovering alternative ways of developing our identities in the world, questioning our presence in it, and disrupting the status quo and tied up with power relations and political decisions (Comber & Simpson, 2001; Shor, 1999; Freire, 1998, Luke & Freebody, 1997). Critical pedagogy, conversely, can be understood as the way teachers and students learn, inquiry, produce, be curious, and resist all together. It is part of a project that is at the level of learners' and teachers' aspirations, understanding of dreams and reality and that leads to forms of action and struggle. Learners and educators must engage in risks, in learning from mistakes, in inquiries. These are all essential parts of knowledge (Mayo, 2007, Darder, 2002; Freire & Faundez, 1989). Both, critical literacy and critical pedagogy, are therefore based in social justice commitments.

My cultural, professional, and academic experiences helped me find great contacts and collaborators for this work, especially during the data collecting period. The fieldwork for this process included two public schools; three workshops on Milani; three presentations on my project – two in Italy and one in Brazil; two meetings in a Brazilian book club on *Pedagogy of Hope*, my favorite Freire's book; a two-month, online Brazilian seminar through the Freire Institute in São Paulo, Brazil; interviews with member representatives of the Freire and Milani association; public teachers' union assemblies in Brazil; and the organization of a seminar on Freire and Milani dialogue that created in collaboration with my advisor Professor Maria José Botelho. This last event convened at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, enhanced my data collection

process. In practical terms, it symbolized the encounter between Freire and Milani's ideas. It took place in April 2018 and brought together critical pedagogy scholar Ira Shor, who worked closely with Freire for many years, and Edoardo Martinelli, former student of Milani, who dedicates his life to teaching Milani's philosophy around the world.

I met Martinelli in Italy a year before his visit to the United States, and travelled with him to three different Italian cities, attending conferences, seminars and school visits relating to the work of Milani. I was very interested in connecting with more people dedicated to keeping the principles of Milani and the school of Barbiana alive, while reinterpreting them for the needs of the school community and challenges of the 21st century.

The connections between Freire and Milani were always present for many of the educators that I met during these meetings. They were interested in hearing more about Freire, especially concerning the applicability of his ideas, a topic I discuss in Chapter 4.

During this weekly tour in March 2017, Martinelli suggested that I subscribe to a Catholic network of hostels for pilgrims while travelling to his presentations and seminars on Milani at the Barbiana School. It was a great experience.

I knew that Milani urged his students to travel abroad to learn world languages in a simple and economic way. I still have my membership card identifying my pilgrimage. Searching for the two Catholic educators was certainly comparable to a pilgrimage made in many miles. Mine was made not only by foot, but by plane, train, bus, and auto, across time and space, travelling in reality but also metaphorically.

Through this project, I connected not only with Professor Shor and Martinelli, but

also with Nanni Banchi, former carpenter at the Barbiana School and current president of Don Milani and Barbiana's School Research Centers. For a more theoretical understanding of both educators' work, I exchange many messages with Professor Peter Mayo of the University of Malta, whose books and articles were instrumental during my research period.

Critical literacy and critical pedagogy (which I also refer to sometimes as radical pedagogy) are at the center of this project. Critical literacy and critical pedagogy encompass "reading the world" as well as "reading the word" (Freire & Macedo, 1987). These notions are under the bigger umbrella of critical consciousness, related to Freire's concept of *conscientização* (consciousness raising) which recognizes oppressive relation dynamics as a starting point in changing the status quo (Freire, 2002; Burbules & Berk, 1999). Critical pedagogy in relation to critical literacy helps to understand broader contexts in which texts are produced through literacy practices aware of social settings (Wallace, 1999).

Only the word can make us equal. When the oppressed use words fluently, they will be able to defend themselves from tyranny (Barbiana's Students 1967 and 1996; Milani, 1975). For Freire and Milani, access to education and the understanding of language—making good use of the word, not only as a personal form of defense, but in the name of a group—serves as one of the most important tools of liberation. They said it more than half a century ago; the situation is not much different today. We still need to teach and learn how to appreciate and understand words to advocate for ourselves and avoid manipulation.

Thus, from the data collection, I tried to see how Freire and Milani inspired educators to recast their ideas and to be conscious of their work as a form of political transformation. I wanted to create a critical literacy and critical pedagogical movement that approximates Freire and Milani in a practical and academic way. This attempt to give strength to a movement of using critical literacy and studies in a present-day, global educational context.

The theoretical tools that guided my work are based on Discourse, power and knowledge relations. The tool is the fundamental concept that each of us when presenting ourselves within available discourses are not based on independent or essential self-consciousness, but we are subjects of cultural narratives and storylines (Barrett, 1991; Davies, 2000). Therefore, this study is informed by feminist poststructuralism that contribute to better extract findings from the analysis of my data, and the way I represent critical pedagogical practices opening to instances of change in educational settings through political and social justice commitments.

The data was collected over 50 hours of interviews with scholars in Brazil, Italy, and United States, in two public schools where I spent a total of two months doing approximately 250 hours of daily fieldwork observations plus another 100 hours spent in workshops, seminars and online classes on Freire and Milani.

Among the interviews, I highlight three focal participants and a total of about 10 hours of conversations with them about Freire and Milani: Edoardo Martinelli, Ira Shor, and Alex (pseudonym). Martinelli and Shor had a close relation with Milani and Freire, respectively as learners, collaborators, and friends, were particularly helpful. They

recounted many anecdotes and real-life moments with the two educators, which provided additional data set for analysis, but more importantly, their stories gave the tone and understanding of their great humanity, and the compromises that Freire and Milani had to make.

Alex, vice academic manager and spokesperson of the Freirean institute that assists elementary and middle school teachers, also contributed to this work by reporting on current and projected ideas to adapt and reinvent Freire's ideas for the benefit of this and future generations. More considerations regarding these three participants are offered in the Chapter 5, where I present a broader perspective of what it means to teach in the 21st century with Freire and Milani as sources of inspiration.

One fieldwork location was a middle school in a central and urban area of a big city in a northwest region of Italy. The other was an elementary school in the suburbs of a big city in the northeast of Brazil, the same region where Paulo Freire was born and did his initial work as an educator.

Both schools are, in very different degrees, inspired by Milani's and Freire's teaching methodologies and commitments to social justice. Both schools also have a strong component of inclusion of differently abled children beyond similar public schools, according to coordinators testimonials. This inclusionary practice were key commitments in both schools.

As much as I tried to aim for objectivity, as in any research, true neutrality does not exist, and the process of data collection was an emotional, stressful, and enjoyable journey. It involved many non-official moments such as preparation by phone and e-mail,

last minute requests to present my research for teachers, students, parents, and even a public health course on Freire's work at a public college in Brazil; hours of conversation during train and car trips, dozens of lunches and dinners where discussions on education and politics took place.

All of this contributed to a better understanding of my own experiences as a participant-observer-researcher (Handing, 1993; McDonough, 2014), as I teased out Freirean and Milanian ideas in these different contexts.

My study and journey started as an independent project in 2015 comparing the scholarship of these two educators. I continued this work by conducting a literature review their scholarship and letters, and then by creating letters that I have updated since my comprehensive exam presentation. Since the beginning of my doctoral studies, I knew I wanted to develop a work based on critical consciousness which I wanted to refer to the idea of helping students to develop critical literacies so they can transform the world, even if only in small drops in their own pools of reality.

During the extensive and sometimes strenuous process of data collection that includes not only the fieldwork but also review of the literatures, I combined ethnographic case studies through interviews with critical and radical pedagogy supporters with observations of current practices in the two schools mentioned above.

This methodological approach of merging ethnography and case studies came from my commitment to acknowledge my role as both researcher and participant, probing the particularities of Freire's and Milani's legacies in different environments.

The ethnographic case studies methodology is supported by a large assemblage of

techniques in which I dug, scratched, and analyzed from different angles and employed multiple research methods and interpretive strategies (Kincheloe, 2005; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Deleuze & Guatarri, 1987) to complement my main ethnographical stance and academic formation. I also created conditions, in this way, to enrich the case studies report and narrative.

Comparing the two schools is not the main goal of this project, but in some respects, the process allowed me to better explore the connections between Freire and Milani and to understand how their ideas are borrowed, reproduced, adapted, and reinvented nowadays in similar environments. The outcome of this ethnographic project based in case studies was fundamental for the process of exploring some of the ways in which critical consciousness, according to Freire and Milani, has been theorized and retheorized.

Nevertheless, this work is not complete and can be continued in other settings including other radical thinkers and philosophers in the education field. This contribution can be better visualized in the data analysis section represented by conversations, interviews, observations, and notes from professors, educators, students, and those who research Freire's and Milani's work. In sum, a narrative approach as one tool of analysis is what has helped bring to light much of this work.

I looked for the evidence of Freire's and Milani's influence in current school practices and through educators' discourses to build a framework in education that can lead to a global dialogue from which all schools and educators can benefit. Freire and Faundez (1989) mention in a dialogue book that research doesn't mean constructing a

metaphysics of metaphysics but rather provides an understanding of how ideas take concrete shape in the minds and actions of a culturally-dependent people.

This statement inspired me to look for how this concrete shape is brought into practice today. The imagined exchange of letters between Freire and Milani are the heart of my literature review. My vision was growing from a need to hear them “talk” to each other, which effectively happens through the interchange of ideas and programs that scholars and schools create from their perspectives and pedagogies. I have to confess that it has been a very slow process, slower than I had hoped it would be.

Statement of Problem

In examining the dilemma that motivated me to start this research, I realized the growing necessity of affirming education as a political act, as was said by Freire (1998). Milani also believed that educators must have clear ideas about social and political problems and must take sides (Milani, 1997). My initial inquiry, consequently, was in probing how the legacy of Freire and Milani help make our teachers and students more reflexive, independent, and critically conscious on political issues.

The two public schools that I visited are micro-representations of a variety of schools in the world that carry on their ideas. I am aware of this limitation but recognize that these settings also offer something special that I can maybe call hope, because of their commitment to Freire and Milani’s approaches, philosophies, and methodologies and an urgency I felt from them to empower the oppressed. They struggle for better education and opportunities for the students and better conditions for professionals of education continues, especially in Brazil. It was clear during visits to both schools that

their philosophies were based on the idea of service as progressive force and that they were doing professionally is also politically effective.

In bringing these educators together, I hope to contribute to the field of education, to reassure educators that their teaching and research have sociopolitical consequences. A recent real-world example is Brazil's last elections where the "School without Party" movement (*Escola sem Partido*) seeks to eliminate the teaching of ideologies or political issues and instead, present both sides of a topic. This effectively reinforces the old system of oppression by colonizers and undermines critical reflection in the process. The same movement pledges to strip Freire from the title of "Patron of Education" in Brazil in order to foment a neutral school discussion in all levels. The movement does not know Freire's philosophy. They do not see that their pledge imposes an ideology. The project was filed in December 11, 2018, after twelve attempts to vote by the Brazilian House of Deputies, an indication of the strong opposition to this project. It can be unfiled in the future. After the Brazilian presidential elections of 2018, I had several phone conversations about the idea of a "school without party or without ideology" with Nelise (more about Nelise on the section *Participants*, in Chapter 3). She is the pedagogical coordinator of the Freire-inspired School. All our conversations were critical of this project. Here are some of her thoughts:

Nelise: Essa "escola sem partido" é impossível de existir. Nós trabalhamos sempre com a verdade e o professor tem suas ideologias o que representa sua vivência e sua forma de pensar. O aluno se beneficia da experiência do professor. É impossível transformar o professor em um robô. É como

Translation:

That "school without party" is impossible to exist. We always work with the truth and the teachers have their own ideologies that represent their experience and way of thinking. The student benefits from the teachers' experience. It is impossible to turn the teacher into a

querer criar uma lei de que não se pode mais beber água. Essa ideia de colocar uma mordaca na nossa boca não vai ficar. Somos acima de qualquer ideologia específica e qualquer governo.

robot. It's like wanting to create a law that you cannot drink water any more. The idea of a gag law will not stay. We are above any specific ideology and any government.

In the book *Pedagogy of Hope*, Freire (1994, p. 111) says it will never be appropriated for educators to ask learners to find their own ‘reading of the world,’ in a framework they themselves have created to teach this content.” He continues to say that the struggle between right and left wing lead him to believe that neutrality is not possible. For him, neutrality is “a cunning way of seeking to conceal the option.” This citation was also part of the manifest that Freire’s wife, Nita Araújo, and a group of Brazilian politicians and intellectuals produced in 2017 to support Freire retaining his title. Professor Ira Shor sent me the original document and asked that I translate the Portuguese to English to gather signatures of support in the United States.

As part of the problem statement, I mentioned the need to rethink pedagogy with more critical reflexivity. It is necessary to theorize together, to take time to reflect on ideas and practices and practices in any school setting. Unfortunately, time is precious and limited and there is little time for these moments during the school day.

School policy normally calls for more classroom hours and less time to congregate informally with colleagues to debate and discuss theories, tendencies, and new ideas. The teachers in the Freire-inspired Brazilian School resent this lost opportunity for debate and cross-pollination. The teachers in the Milani-inspired School were able to recognize the need to preserve this time (once a week) to dedicate themselves to research, workshops and school visits.

Limitations of Study

Limitations in this current project were due to economic issues, time constraints, and lack of access to some of the schools that I contacted. Due the limitations, I had to choose to visit the two schools that used Freire's and Milani's ideas in practical ways. I plan to visit more schools in the future to expand this work.

The visits took me to new places and make many new connections that, due the necessity of narrow down my research, I could not mention in this study. There is a network of critical literacy unfolding in informal ways, that connects one person who studies and applies Freire's or Milani's ideas to others who want to focus on raising consciousness and critical literacy in this century.

Another limitation was finding a school or center that carried both philosophers' ideas and inspirations at the same time. Although, concepts and practices based in both educators do not have a common ground yet, many of the educators who are inspired in Milani's idea also know about Freire or, at least, heard about him. The Freirean educators, on the other hand, rarely know about Milani and the School of Barbiana. Therefore, many times great part of the time of my contacts and interviews were used to introducing Milani to my participants.

Nevertheless, these experiences gave me hope and showed the possibility that these concepts and practices can expand, be taught in the schools, and be discussed among elementary and middle school teachers, despite policies and rules that repress and constrain teachers' actions, especially in the Brazilian schools. The word "resistance" is out and circulating so there is reason to believe the world can be changed, but I am also

aware that the interpretations and findings are based in my own beliefs and points of view and that more findings can be revealed once I spend more time with it, but a timeline for this study had to be followed. I will revisit my data set in the future, and I plan also to draw more parallels among Freire, Milani, and other important and historical radical philosophers of education who, many times, influenced their work.

I knew my presence influenced the teachers and the data-analysis process, but my own critical pedagogy beliefs helped me examine and confirm their pedagogical radicalism in their daily life.

I was careful to talk to the teachers during class and help them with the students only when solicited, although the teachers were always open to me walking around or letting the students come to me with questions about my work and their class work. At the beginning, I was even reluctant to eat the school food, but both schools insisted, and I relented; it was one more sign of trust. I did not resist, and, in the end, I was fed by both schools in many ways.

That is why, while sitting in the back (or sometimes in the front) of the classrooms, I listened to teachers and students and participated carefully but with an uplifted heart to be a witness to critical literacy in action, not only in theory through the books and articles by scholars such as Allan Luke, James Gee, and Hilary Janks.

Theoretical Framework

This work would be never possible in isolation. In educational research, it is vital to understand current critical pedagogy ideas and concepts based on the ancestral elements that shaped them, and that are, somehow committed, but not forcefully attached to the

radical histories of these memories and legacies.

I read the data over and over across more than one theorist. The theories that I present in this section were the lenses for understanding and making meaning of my data. Plugging the theory and the data into one another is an exercise of thinking with theory. This process helps to illustrate the way that knowledge proliferates and opens up instead of staying simplified and exiled, as Jackson and Mazzei (2013, p. 263) describe. Considering these ideas, the theoretical framework for this work is initially based on Foucault's concept of power connected to genealogy and Gee's and Janks' notions of discourse and politics, taking into consideration the notions of deconstructing events to reconstruct them in order to better understand narratives on power dynamics and social justice actions in today's contexts.

The notions of critical literacy and discourses are better understood using Foucault's (1995) concept of power. His ideas cover a broader sense of relationships and interactions and make power responsible for creating our social world as both a productive and unproductive or coercive tool. In Foucault's point of view, power dynamics are established from the micro context of power/knowledge to a macro context that could include an entire field of study.

Nietzsche's concept of genealogy also complements this work as a theoretical tool. Genealogy helps also to understand what is already there (Foucault & Rabinow, 1984, p.78). Foucault's power relation views and Nietzsche's genealogy as theoretical tools help me to retrace social, historical, and political facts in the process of recognizing memories and reflections on both educators' ideas, recommendations, suggestions but at

the same time giving a new expression to their legacy.

In genealogy, the analysis of speech makes a political character and the concern is to show that speech expresses and produces power. Speech is instrument of power when the words exercise its desired effect. Finally, for the French thinker, speech is where knowledge and power are found: “Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart” (Foucault 1978, p. 101). In the genealogic method, Foucault states that power and discourse have a relationship of dependency; the discourse can be at the same time a tool and have a powerful effect.

Taking different but correlated events into a deep analysis helps to demonstrate how some ideas are conceived and how these events form a matter of a relationship of forces as mechanisms responding to random conflicts (Foucault, 1977; Botelho & Rudman, 2009). Following radical historicists ideas, I consider history as a discontinuous, but connected series of events where unintentional modifications, appropriations, and transformation that inspire the beginning of new events and ideas. These steps are narratives constructed by people and the narrative approach is one tool that helped me to represent my work and deepen and humanize my process of data analysis that complemented and humanized my process of data analysis.

Nietzsche explains that “everything that occurs in the organic world consists of overpowering, dominating” and *that*, in their turn, consists “of re-interpretation, adjustment, in the process of which their former ‘meaning’ and ‘purpose’ must necessarily be obscured or completely obliterated” (Bevir, 2008, p. 267). Hence, by

working with three languages in three countries, there are constant changes in the power dynamics that create different epochs and different political historical realities. I also try to demonstrate that it is through connecting and analyzing events that an education researcher can discover and rediscover relevant issues.

Theories of Discourse with a “Big D” and discourse with a “small d” describe Big D as being part of a specific group, and small d as analyzing occurrences of language in use. Big D maintains that a person saying, doing, and being projects her/himself in different ways depending on the group she/he is in.

The idea of discourse refers to making sense and interpreting conversations flow across time (Gee, 2001; Gee, 2015). In my view, the key is recognition. We put together language, action, interaction, values, beliefs and symbols, among other personal features, in order to be *recognized* as particular individuals who are part of a specific network. It also involves capturing the ways people behave according to their social and historical context.

In Gee’s (2001) definition of literacy, big D discourses can be divided into two categories: the primary discourse is related to experiences in group contexts and the secondary discourses go beyond home-family-peer group spheres and relate to institutions such as churches, schools, community groups, business, organizations and so forth--the communities that were sources of inspiration for the pedagogical practices of Freire and Milani.

These institutions shape our thinking, being, and doing. Gee (1989) also makes the distinction between dominant Discourses that bring potential acquisition of social

goods, and non-dominant Discourses that do not bring social goods but can confer solidarity within a particular social network.

To understand the power of a Big D discourse, it is helpful to think about social and political issues that carry the strength of defining or building knowledge about a particular topic or practice (Gee, 2001). It means that language use is more than human beings talking to each other; it is about the way people produce, reproduce, and reconstruct these Discourses. They exist before us and they may remain after we are gone. The words and deeds are sometimes enacted for generations and people can gain power through this process.

I try to understand power dynamics in discourse through Freire's and Milani's theories but also through the interviews and conversations I engaged in about them. Gee (2011) writes of the role of social language in Big D discourse, used for analyzing languages through ways of acting, interacting, believing, feeling, using non-linguistic symbols, objects, technologies, time and places.

Language is a social practice tied to historical contexts (reproduced or contested). Language views is a concrete example itself of how the moment affects how we communicate Language itself is a way of showing a concrete expression or demonstration of the changes that come as a result of historical and political climate of the moment. Different interests are served since all texts are expressions of cultural positions, ideologies, and discourses (Gee, 1990; Gee, 2011; Luke & Freebody, 1997). The language in use informs identities, relationships, systems of knowledge and beliefs, and questions of power and status.

The current social political structures that are fomenting so many changes and bringing a return to conservative ideas and policies in both Brazil and Italy prompted me to re-read Janks' (2012) concepts of little p politics that drive our daily choices, feelings, positionality, and sense of identity in and around school and community issues.

That connects, of course, to big P politics, defined by Janks as government and world trade agreements. Some examples of this power dynamic: United Nations' actions to keep peace, events of ethnic or religious genocide and world tribunals, issues related to capitalism, instances of money laundering and linguistic imperialism.

Janks' concepts were instrumental as I observed and identified the teaching of consciousness and critical literacy in action. These concepts helped me contextualize little p politics within big P politics, and how they are introduced and reinterpreted through the lens of Freire and Milani consciousness and critical literacy teaching.

Little p politics (...) is about the politics of identity and place; it is about small triumphs and defeats; it is about winners and losers, haves and have-nots, school bullies and their victims; it is about how we treat other people day by day; it is about whether or not we learn someone else's language or recycle our own garbage. Little p politics is about taking seriously the feminist perspective that the personal is the political (Janks, 2012, p.151).

Echoing Janks, big P and little p politics are the central idea of the critical literacy studies since it is from reading and writing that educators give the chance to students to understanding socioeconomical mechanisms in the world. From there, the learners have the chance to reflect critically. As Freire defends in most of his works, we need to understand the conscious politics of language and enact the consciousness in our practices as educators and as well in our way of living in the world.

Therefore, the power-literacy-discourse-politics framework offers theoretical tools for my analysis of both educators' work and their significance in today's world. This ensemble of theories provides a way to understand and explore the social event of spoken, unspoken, and late-spoken dialogue that is vital in discussions of literacy and the process of creating and recasting knowledge.

On Freire's and Milani's work with offering their learners a new awareness of their presence in the world as that implies the knowledge of not only being here but being able of transforming it as a critical response to this presence (Freire, 1985, p.15), despite the presence of an economic and colonial elite that constantly try to prevent it to happen.

This framework provides the necessary basis for discussing Freire and Milani's ideologies and their interpretations beyond their many books and letters. It is central to the process of constructing social ideologies, of understanding how languages use positions one (i.e., underrepresented students) in the world from the micro to the macro discourse.

One questionable aspect of Freire's and Milani's viewpoint is a tendency to see power as binary. This may limit an understanding of the complexities of power within and across communities. Framing this paper in Gee's concepts of dialogue and discourse, respectively, and incorporating Foucault's view of power, helps me integrate the importance of critical literacies and radical pedagogies in constructing and reconstructing identities and community life. With an awareness of the power dynamics, people can more effectively generate social justice, create political and social changes, and challenge the notion that the oppressor's discourse is the only one. In terms of privilege, it is

interesting and important to note the number of times Milani and Freire used their own status, their identity as men with access to the “big D” discourse, to provide greater resources to their students.

Thus, I decided to combine Gee’s (2001) views on literacy, discourse analysis and CDA, and Janks’ view on politics and discourse aligned under the perspectives and influences of Foucault’s (1995) notion of power and Nietzsche’s genealogy (Foucault, 1977). The theoretical framework guides the process of examining the social languages, the style, and the cultural implications present in Freire’s and Milani’s discourses and in the discourses about them and their works.

It is not simple to analyze ideas that one agrees for the most part. The fact that I admire most of their practices and theories, required a more critical analysis so I could better represent their voices and theories for teaching language and literacy. It is important to also keep in mind that Freire and Milani did not talk about their work as an established method to be followed. The so called *Método Paulo Freire para a Alfabetização de Adultos* (Paulo Freire’s Method for Adult Literacy) or the *scrittura collettiva* (collective writing), as an example from the School of Barbiana, must be analyzed and adapted to each sociopolitical context, and not merely reproduced.

The Freirean view on literacy is more widely recognized, but many scholars still discuss Milani’s theories. In this context, critical discourse analysis helps me to examine the significant cultural models (images, stories, principles, metaphors that are considered normal or typical by a given group in a given situation) that are triggered or that could be triggered by their words and phrases, and finally, what their Discourses (with capital D)

could be part of (Gee, 2001).

These guiding elements include an awareness of the conditions under which their texts were prepared. In this case, the fact that *both* educators were in exile during their most productive period of work plays an important role in the letters that they wrote as well as the ones that I offer in this epistolary exercise. In sum, these tools are helpful in analyzing how Freire and Milani theories on literacy describe the power differential that creates systems that disenfranchise the oppressed and economically-reward the oppressor.

Therefore, this genealogy-literacy-discourse-power framework offers structures to analyze both educators' work and their significance in today's world, especially in current climate that sees a return of right-wing parties dominating the governments of both Brazil and Italy.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to explore questions, and/or tensions that arise in the examination of the scholarship of both educators, to analyze and to discuss the implications of their work, and finally to take notice of how their pedagogies offer insights into contemporary views in the fields of critical literacies and critical pedagogies.

I also hope to provide the tools to better interpret their thoughts and deeds and to suggest a combined Freire-Milani approach that educators can adopt anywhere there's a willingness to risk implementing critical literacy and critical pedagogy approaches in their day-to-day tasks. Through the case studies and testimonies presented here, I expect to provide a better understanding of the way their work is evidenced nowadays and how it influences teachers, scholars, and their students. Through a personal journey, I have

tried to synthesize and understand their contributions, extract the lessons of their actions, and review how their philosophies have been applied in this century.

There are important similarities in Freire's and Milani's theories and methods. Both had great respect for providing a formal education for everyone, and empathy for the challenges that learners and educators face. Both were also strong opponents of the policies and practices that marginalized and nonconforming students experienced in schools. Their work, based in literacy for consciousness and transformative learning, has positively influenced many and challenged many others over the last 50 decades. In my journey, searching their influences and reinterpretations, I realize that both can be still contested and also loved, but never forgotten.

They continue crossing borders through their ideas. The conscious dialogue in education is still part of establishing conditions where oppression is fought. Their ideas continue to be discussed, practiced, and analyzed today. Therefore, my dissertation research questions are:

1. In what ways are multiple educational contexts engaged with Paulo Freire's and Lorenzo Milani's pedagogical practices?
2. In what ways have their pedagogical practices inspired new teaching strategies and innovation?

Experiences that Have Brought Me to this Project

The construction of my work is multilayered. It reflects my multicultural formation as Brazilian-Italian-American. I grew up with a form of *saudade* or longing for the countryside of Italy. It was a place where I have never lived but that I constantly

heard about from my parents. I often felt their pain at not going past third and fifth grade in Italy, due the war, poverty, and the difficulty of getting to school every day. My parents' preoccupation with our schooling and my curiosity about the life that they left behind were part of my interest in Freire and Milani's efforts to help those who did not have the access to schools that I had. The key motivation to this project connects to my experience as a public-school student, my interest in critical pedagogy, and my own questions about consciousness-raising from years of teaching children and teenagers in elementary, middle and secondary schools, and in college settings.

I must mention here that my memories of studying and learning are good ones. I was one of those students who loved and cherished words. But my memories as a student observing the growing degradation and disrespect of public institutions year after year, from age four until my twenties, inspired me to question how I can resist and help to change some of these structures and practices. The lack of incentive for teachers to draw their creativity and explore research opportunities, the low salaries, the deficiency of classroom resources were painful realities.

As an educator, I wanted to overcome this feeling. I wanted to offer my narratives and enthusiasm about the good examples that I have witnessed, the good learnings that I have gleaned through observing Freire's and Milani's legacies abroad.

On the bright side of this public-school education picture, my fieldwork experiences for this project in both Italy and Brazil buoyed me. The engaging and passionate examples of the Freire-and Milani-inspired teachers who opened their classes provided a feeling of comfort and optimism. The presence of more robust and liberating

practices gave me hope.

Hearing the thoughts of people in charge of the academic direction of both schools has contributed to this also. Having access to school directors and coordinators who trust their teachers to create an expressive environment in classroom was uplifting. The resources in Brazil were certainly slimmer than the ones in Italy and the teachers were obviously overwhelmed, but the desire to provide a better future for their students was there. It was palpable.

Significance of Study

The goal of this dissertation is not only to bring the work of two educators together, but also to build an interpretative framework from these two similar philosophies of education, as part of a future work towards a heuristic for synthesizing philosophies of education. Some of these theories are discussed in scholarly works but do not effectively describe practical tools, but here, thanks to the ethnographic research practices, I witnessed them in classrooms, union meetings, workshops and, aim to foreground them this project.

The study highlights how their pedagogies still engage, inspire, and empower students and educators all around the world. I am also interested in their experience related to issues of power. Milani was known as centralizer instructor that allowed the contribution of few fixed collaborators--never open to curious observers, but always welcoming people who had something of value for his students. Likewise, during my period in the Milani-inspired School, many teachers welcomed my participation and collaboration with the students, appreciated my assistance with in-class activities, invited

me to present my research to the parents during the Parents' Day visit, and included me with the whole faculty during their general meeting about their current projects.

Freire, instead, had a more dialogical posture of teaching, where everybody could participate. Unfortunately, due a misinterpretation of a current movement against Freire's contributions for education and his anti-oppression ideas, he has been accused of having destroyed the authority of the teachers in class by a current right-wing movement in Brazil.

The students in the Freire-inspired School in Brazil were very respectful and sweet in the presence of any teacher figure, including myself when I was left alone in classroom with them. In the Milani-inspired School, the teachers would take more time to establish quiet before starting their classes. Sometimes silence would come through the cost of raising their voices, and in other cases, from a technique of calmly waiting in front of the class.

I also hope to make a meaningful contribution through the non-conventional literature review practice that includes letter generation. Through the theoretical lenses of genealogy and analysis discourse and the design methodology that considers ethnographic case study as the main tool of research, that incorporates different points of view to understand a phenomenon.

I hope this study contributes to constructs that can be seen as opportunities and/or provocations for questioning teaching practices and considering further dialogues (White, 2016). The combination of dialogues through different genres, time, and space may inspire future researchers to broaden the way they represent sociopolitical issues in

schools and communities to reveal struggles of inequalities and injustices.

Another relevant contribution of this work would be revitalizing the importance of a multilingual critical analysis. I used Portuguese, Italian, and English to write this dissertation. The knowledge of these three languages greatly facilitated this inquiry and made Milani's work much more accessible since most of his writing is in Italian. Some of Freire's work has been translated into English, but my ability to access his original writings and interviews in Portuguese calls attention to the complex practice of translation.

The translation and creation of this work that interlaces three languages adds another layer to the analytic and writing practices. I act as researcher, interpreter, and intermediary of these fictionalized encounters as I attempt to analyze, synthesize, and interpret their work.

I also believe that connecting ideas from different times and places, bringing together Freire's and Milani's work and perspectives, are powerful tools for helping marginalized communities. These educators theorize, above all, the importance of learning to read and write critically in order to keep pace with the fast changes in our knowledge-based society. They focus not only on the *practice* of learning, but also on the participation and reconstruction of sociopolitical structures by teaching a curriculum that respects and honors the background and stories of each human being.

Freire's and Milani's lives show that the most adverse situations can become learning opportunities. For example, the attempt to silence them through exile increased their critical consciousness.

The work they generated during this period contributes greatly to education. However, bell hooks (1994) cautions against the voyeuristic points of view through which students and teachers tend to see Freire, which can also be applied to Milani. The focus should be on their ideas and the communities they served. I agree with hooks, to a certain extent, because if one studies Freire's and Milani's ideologies and literacy insights for schools without knowing their experiences and life trajectories, their theories and teachings would be decontextualized. Understanding their social positions and identities bring researchers, teachers, and students closer to the power of their scholarship on critical literacies.

I hope this project becomes a source of inspiration in this current climate of renewed right-wing political leanings. With more conservative political parties in power, there are fewer opportunities for dialogue and critical literacy programs at school. In Brazil, for example, a movement called 'school without political party' has already been created. Defending and researching educators who are transmuting Freire's and Milani's ideas in projects like mine could sustain and promote indispensable school debate that conservatives are trying to silence.

Methodology Overview

Through a combination of ethnographic and case studies, and some influence of bricolage methodology design, I not only describe what I see, read, and hear, but also attempt to connect observable patterns from my participation and observation (Heath & Street, 2008). I also recognize that the interweaving of many methodologies is also influenced by some characteristics of assemblage (Deleuze & Guatarri, 1987) theory that

offers multiplicities, lines, and many layers, establishing connections.

This research gives more emphasis to the juxtaposition of encounters and social relationships that are not tied to precise historical times over formal analysis of Freire's and Milani's works. Therefore, alongside the research literature *by* both educators, the study will also bring a review of the research literature *about* them through their biographies, theories, and practices, and through analysis of interviews with individuals who worked directly with them.

The methodology applied in this project includes drawing upon processes and practices; understanding backgrounds; developing interpretive strategies; describing interactions; and getting close to cultures, peoples, and ideas both physically and socially (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2011; Pollner & Emerson, 2001). As an ethnographer, I enter both in the worlds and words of others to better understand what they find meaningful and important.

For the data collection, I analyzed field observations from both schools, interviews with scholars and students as well as with the principals and teachers. Field observations and interviews are different forms of collecting data. Stake (1995) stresses that what is observed is normally not controlled by the researcher who goes where the factors are occurring, hoping they will continue to unfold while the researcher is there.

The lack of control over of what is observed is a fascinating aspect of the research process for an ethnographer. Any movement happening in the environment, especially in the classroom, can become the nexus for connecting among and between theories and formulating implications for future researches.

The interviews, instead, have a different nature because they designed, targeted and influenced by the researcher. Stake suggests being meticulous in analyzing transcriptions and in listening to the recorded material to catch meanings that may not be apparent at first (Stake, 1995). The transcription of the interview becomes, though, a crucial part of the research. In refining attention and analyzing the transcription of different narratives, a researcher can dive deeper into meanings, words, reflections, body language, facial expression, and sounds such as laughter, hesitation, pauses, and sighs.

When exploiting the work of discourse analysis, for example, the researcher can notice elements that are drawn from other texts, discourses that are either ideological or are not, power dynamics, and agency, among other elements. In my particular case as a researcher, I can also apply the critical literacy tools learned by studying Freire and Milani to better comprehend the social interactions I witness, the spoken and unspoken words in-between the lines.

This study is also significantly informed by combining the principles of ethnography because it guides the representation of my discoveries as both participant and observer. As an ethnographer, I try to translate the perspective of others participating in non-familiar traditions while maintaining my own truth and point of view.

Connecting Freire's and Milani's theories and practices is, in my view, a way of closing a perceived gap: I am in-between their cultures and in-between my own cultures. I am studying Freire's and Milani's thoughts and trying to build a bridge to connect them to each other, and their work to the present day. The dialogic framework allows me to listen to and represent the many voices at work in scholarship and in various school

contexts.

The literature review in Chapter 2, I bring some elements of arts-based research that are a form of inquiry in qualitative research that uses arts-derived tools that may include analysis, representation, performance, data collection (Leavy, 2009; Bagley & Castro-Salazar, 2012). My inspiration for this section came from studies on performance ethnography which incorporates creative ways to engage and reflect on what is being presented, re-enacting the collection from observations, field notes, analysis, and theories (Alexander, 2005; Diversi & Moreira, 2009; Denzin 2010). Therefore, as an ethnographer, I try to capture the implications, connotations, and meaning in different contexts, comparing case studies that share a similar culture based on the theories and practices of critical pedagogies.

The case study methodology generates a multilayer dialogue through time and space and works as a form of agency, to unite the two educators' dispositions (for good and bad), my own identity as an educator in formation, and the ideas of other scholars and pedagogies.

Data Collection and Findings Overview

My data collection, illuminated in Chapter 3, comes from class and meetings observations and interviews. I looked for moments, expressions, actions, silence and noises that indicate how, when, and why educators and students were practicing critical pedagogy, pedagogy of liberation, pedagogy of hope or anything that relates to the Freirean and Milanian approaches. The interviews, naturally, reveal these aspects more clearly, but the observations in class and during teachers' meetings and union assemblies

also bring to light interesting aspects of the same principles defended by Freire and Milani.

In Chapter 4, I examine how educators and students interpret and implement Freire and Milani and highlight four main aspects or themes. In each school, Freire and Milani represented powerful symbols among the educators, but less so among the students. The coordinators, my first contacts in both schools, reported that the teachers were engaged in the ideas of Freire and Milani. Most of the teachers, though, did not have an extensive knowledge of either educator's work. They were familiar with *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Freire and *Letter to a Teacher* by Milani and his students from the School of Barbiana.

Although there is a belief that ethnography should engage in a long-term participation and observation in a chosen context, the ethnographic case studies in this project represent intensive short periods to explore more variable data from the same field of interest (Parthasarathy, 2008) – I spent a total of two months of fieldwork and observations in both schools with an average of six hours a day in each school listening, interviewing, and talking informally with scholars, educators, including time with experts on Freire and Milani outside of both schools.

As I have mentioned, the events in Italy, were seminars on Milani's legacies, especially celebrating the 50th anniversary of his death, and workshops for educators on the School of Barbiana's teaching practices. In Brazil, I attended a book club for teachers at the Center and School of Formation of Educators Professor Paulo Freire on Freire's writings, lectures on Freire's legacies, teachers' union assemblies, and an online course at

the Paulo Freire Institute, in São Paulo, on Freire's pedagogy as a reflection on how to prepare educators for the "schools of the future."

The school coordinator and I organized a trip to see Edoardo Martinelli, former student of Don Milani, at the Milani-inspired School, in the northwest of Italy. This two-day event brought the teachers new connection to Milani and his work. The teachers in Brazil are in constant engagement with Freire's ideas through one of the Paulo Freire institutes, where they attend regular workshops and discussion sessions.

Due to the current political situation in Brazil, with a strong movement against Paulo Freire's philosophy in the school system, I have decided to use a pseudonym for the Paulo Freire institute that I visited and the participant who I interviewed. This institute, a place that the teachers from the Freire-inspired School strongly recommended I visit, has been renewed and embodies the memory of Paulo Freire in every corner with beautiful quotations and images of the Brazilian educator. It has a vast library of Freire's work. According to Alex (pseudonym), spokesperson for the organization and also a history teacher, the institute has also the commitment to reestablish and revitalize the philosophy of Freire.

From a vast data collection that includes interviews, fieldwork, personal reflections, and creative writing, I re/present the practices of Freire's and Milani's ideas applied and recast in multiple contexts from individual and collective inspiration and commitment rather than from established policies or curriculum requirements.

I also suggest avenues for future pedagogical studies on radical pedagogy and practices taking into consideration that most literacy programs that evoke the critical

pedagogy concepts, do not include an opportunity for the teachers to scrutinize and debate their complex ideas (Bartlett, 2005).

Therefore, I attempt to make this project an inspiration for new projects on critical pedagogies. Projects that can spark inspiration for world-wide social change. Projects where educators' understanding and representation of Freire's and Milani's ideas are presented, published, and discussed to generate more transformative teaching and learning in all levels of schooling, in formal or informal educational settings.

Summary of Dissertation Chapters

The composition of this study is made up of five chapters. In this chapter, Chapter 1, I described the journey that inspired my interest in bringing Freire and Milani together. I questioned the lack of studies describing the schools' and teachers' practices based on their philosophies. I explicated the theoretical framework that guided me in this project which combines issues of power in relationship to discourse and discourse politics.

In Chapter 2, I review the literature by and about Freire and Milani. I employ a less common genre of literature review in which I use arts-based pedagogical and performance ethnographic influences to write letter exchanges between these two scholars as synthesis and analysis of the literatures.

In Chapter 3, I explain the context, methodology, and participants in the study. I also outline the conceptual tools used in the study--genealogy by Nietzsche and Foucault and discourse analysis by Gee.

In Chapter 4, I analyze the data collected during my fieldwork in two public schools and from interviews with people who represents organizations that seek to

continue Freire's and Milani's ideas and I present the findings.

Lastly, in Chapter 5, I explain the implications of my research for the field of radical pedagogy and critical literacy and consider next steps. I also discuss how this dissertation contributes to the field of education, offering a new framework that combines radical literacy not limited to one country or theorist, but rather with a more comprehensive and global view.

CHAPTER 2

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Somente o diálogo, que implica num pensar crítico, é capaz, também, de gerá-lo. Sem ele, não há comunicação e sem esta, não há verdadeira educação.

Only dialogue, which requires critical thinking, is also capable of generating critical thinking. Without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education.

-Freire (1989)

This section on the literature review is based extensively on books, letters and articles (academic and non-academic) written by Freire and Milani and by scholars and educators who worked with them or were directly influenced by them. It combines pedagogical and sociopolitical approaches developed from 1950, when Milani started publishing, until the present day and considers the critical work developed by Freire and Milani, known as critical pedagogy.

I had to purchase most of books on Milani and the School of Barbiana because I could not find them in American libraries or on online search engines. The sources on Paulo Freire, on the other hand, are much more available in the United States. In a qualitative manner, I tried to extract profiles of ideas and contextual information contained in publications from both educators (primary sources) as well as from secondary sources.

Through the Five College Consortium libraries, since 2012, I have been finding many books by and about Paulo Freire but found only two books about Lorenzo Milani. Nowadays, this number has increased to about five. Through library databases such as Jstor and ERIC, I tracked down some articles from scholars based in Brazil, Italy, and, especially

in Malta, combining and comparing the work of Freire and Milani. The articles had historical, theoretical, and philosophical considerations, lacking examples from contemporary school practices based in either educator. I noticed an extensive list of references by Professor Peter Mayo of the University of Malta. This led me contact him. We still exchange e-mails on Freire, Milani, and adult education.

During my travels to Italy, I bought and received books by and on Lorenzo Milani including his first one, *Esperienze Pastorali (Pastoral Experiences) Lettera a una Professoressa (Letter to a Teacher)*. First published in 1967, this is an essential work in understanding the School of Barbiana. It is the result of an exercise of collective writing. My most precious search was for a book in which Milani had spoken on Freire or vice versus. I could find only one book on collective writing published by one of the Milani's ex-students (mentioned above). In this book, Freire was invited to write the epilogue. I could not locate this book in any bookstore in Italy, nor in any online bookstore, however, I was able to borrow it from Yale University through the University's interlibrary loan service.

The majority of the literature that I reviewed on both educators does not combine or compare their work. The few works that mention the similarities between them are from an author from Malta, Professor Peter Mayo, another in Brazil, Danilo Streck, from Universidade Vale do Rio dos Sinos, and from Virginia Guichot Reinas, Universidad de Sevilla. All these works do not go beyond the historical and theoretical level. I could not find any that consider current classroom praxis on both educators together, but many case studies and ethnographies analyze Freire's ideas and concepts, especially critical how

consciousness influences teaching practice.

In addition to looking for articles that compare both educators and that center on critical consciousness, I also researched works that show the relationship between power, ideologies and social identities as methodological and theoretical frameworks. This helped me identify Freire's and Milani's beliefs and ideals and better develop the letter-writing exercise as a constructed dialogue between the two educators.

I also looked for common features in their writing styles, as seen in their books that are often represented as letters to those with whom they want to converse: students, teachers, parents, schools, policy makers and, sometimes, family members. For example, Freire wrote reflective remembrance letters that were like memoirs to his niece Cristina (*Letters to Cristina*, 1996) and to teachers in *Teachers as Cultural Workers* (2005).

On the other hand, many of Milani's books are collections of letters that he wrote to his mother, his students, School of Barbiana collaborators, friends, authorities and his mentor Don Raffaele Bensi, a priest who became Milani's mentor, spiritual director and close friend. Most of these letters were destroyed by Bensi himself.

Many of them were not initially public letters – unless they were written for newspapers or open letters protesting against the military draft - but they all have his distinctive style (clear, direct, humorous). These letters are mostly about his work as a priest-educator and his difficult relationship with the members of the Florentine clergy. Much of his correspondence, during his time as prior - the title used to address Milani as a religious authority in a community - and teacher at Barbiana, were shared with his students.

According to McTavish and Pirro (1990), the qualitative approach is useful for social science research because it provides a broad framework, characterizes social meanings in text and allows for a practical, systematic means to score textual data (p. 247).

They refer to this approach as "contextual content analysis" to distinguish it from more traditional hand and computer content analytic approaches, since the analysis is focused on the features of language as communication and considers the content or the contextual implication of the text.

With Freire and Milani, this approach is pertinent since their writings are influenced by important life-changing situations: exile (both), health problems (Milani), literacy education program for different student populations (both), defensive stages against powerful institutions (both), among other contextual implications.

Beyond Primary Sources and Biographical Work

The journey of this search inspired me to also create letters, a genre much appreciated by both educators – perhaps especially because they lived in an era previous email, Twitter and other kinds of electronic and social media. For this construct, it was important to create a communication exchange with them and between them. Through the epistolary genre, the first step was to create a letter from me to Freire and Milani, and then I re-wrote a set of letters that I had imagined as a possible exchange between the two of them.

My letter starts with me telling them how I met them. The next letters between them concern their lives—their different backgrounds growing up and their similar

“calling” to dedicate their lives to education, as well as their similar processes of becoming teachers who see consciousness raising as the key to lift many people out of oppression and free them from manipulation.

I am aware that I am performing in this ethnographical work, as someone who produces an actor-oriented description and experience of culture (Conquergood, 2013, p. 21). So, I am performing in the creative process of writing letters that represent Freire’s and Milani’s imagined dialogue, and the voices of people who met them literally (the scholars) or figuratively (the school teachers and students of the two public schools).

I orchestrated and invited the educators and disciples of Freire and Milani, Shor and Martinelli (see Chapter 1), to this visit to Massachusetts, and it thus helped me with many other reflections, including how I could have introduced both educators if I had had the chance. This reflection also helped me to think about the circumstances in which I “met” each one of them at different times of my life. Therefore, before presenting a constructed dialogue with them, and analyzing some of the current practices inspired by their work, here is my first letter to Freire to Milani, commenting on my interests and studies.

Dear Paulo Freire and Don Milani,

With a Catholic background and some faith still left in my heart, against all rational thought, I still hold out hope that this letter somehow arrives to both of you. I also hope it is seen by others, who like me want to keep alive your philosophies and raise consciousness and transformative learning around the world.

Neither of you know me but I have learned about, researched, and spoken about you every day for the past five years of my life and I feel your thoughts and ideas are so similar that they can easily be assimilated into a single pedagogy.

I was immediately saddened when I learned that you have never met, but this feeling was

transformed into an optimistic sense of raising consciousness through education, a purpose that both of you have transferred to many educators. I have visited many places and spoken with many others about your philosophies. I have observed your thoughts and absorbed, reflected, interpreted and presented some of these thoughts and actions in this thesis. I want to share it with as many others as possible, not only as an educator, but as a citizen of world.

Both of you have fought the same battle to make education accessible to more people and how to use critical literacy through questioning and looking beyond what is written. Both of you realize the importance of words, using them carefully and recommending your students to do the same, even treating words like characters rather than objects.

Living in exile was a perfect example to illustrate the importance of making excellent use of words. Exile did not silence you, it made you both stronger. Professor Freire's ideas quickly expanded around the globe, while Don Milani's ideas spread throughout Italy and are still expanding today. Your philosophies are needed now as much as ever because we are still hoping for better days for humanity through thoughtful schooling. This ongoing struggle is the same in many schools and in countries in the world, and fortunately your ideas include important reminders to never give up. Combined, they can be even more effective as we can see when tracing your legacies around the world connecting people.

Fortunately, I was able to bring together two of your students – Ira Shor and Edoardo Martinelli - for two days of meetings and exchanging of ideas. Neither of you have heard about social media or the internet, but through this modern communication method, I can see that both of these students are still in touch with each other. Recently, Ira Shor demonstrated appreciation for a Martinelli text, and Martinelli replied saying that they are brothers in pedagogy, fighting together (Martinelli, 2018, on open social media post).

Interestingly, I was introduced to both of you at different times of my life. I met Professor Freire first during high school in 1988. My teachers from my Escola Normal, the secondary school that prepared students to be elementary teachers, would often bring your ideas and books to class. The military dictatorship had finished just three years earlier and we were freely studying you and soon after, in 1989, Brazilians would finally have the right to vote again after 20 years. At the young age of 16, I could even vote at that time. Because of Freire's books and from this period in high school, I learned that I should never profess that "I don't talk about politics" because politics is part of life, and part of every choice that I make.

My meeting with you, Don Milani, happened also in connection with Professor Freire. I was presenting Freire's ideas to some friends in Italy and they mentioned that I may as well be talking about Lorenzo Milani. The most beautiful moments, though, were when I met personally your former students, Mileno, Nevio and Edoardo along with one of your

collaborators, Nanni Banchi, the ex-carpernter of your school, and now president of one of the research associations that bearing your name. They explained to me that you were known by your students as “il Priore” because you were a priest, and a good one, but also a priest who responded to the call of teaching.

Both of you teach to fight not with arms but with words because you knew that “in Africa, in Asia, in Latin America, in the South of Italy, in the mountains, in the fields, and even in the big cities, millions of young people are waiting to be considered equal” (School of Barbiana, 1994, p. 80), More than 50 years went by since this passage was written in Letter to a Teacher and we are still waiting for all people to be given equal consideration, but we also know that only education will help people to thrive, create and critique.

In summary, I hope that this connection between your ideas and my project helps find some answers and inspirations to carry them forward to others. I finish this letter by asking both of you: how can your theories and practices about language, critical literacy, and multimodal pedagogies help us to help the world today? How can we adapt your pedagogies to difficult current times and issues?

Yours truly and still with some faith,

Simone Gugliotta

My inspiration for the practice of producing letters came also from my study of performance ethnography, which provided the tools to reflect on texts that are grounded in different styles, rhythms, idioms, languages and personal identities from different cultures and places. Therefore, my literature review consists of:

- knowledge and reflections by and on Freire and Milani, especially related to the topic of consciousness;
- the few studies that bring both educators and their philosophies together;
- an imaginary brief exchange of letters between the two educators.

I based the letter writing on a qualitative research inquiry method that bridges the gap among academic work, research, teaching and everyday experience, using an art-

based framework, while inviting all of us into dialogue, which is the main ingredient for promoting social-cultural change (Denzin, 2003; Alexander, 2005; Oberg, 2008). This process helped me create a later form of communicating to Freire and Milani that I hope will contribute to the critical pedagogy.

The power of art-based methods draws in literary writing, music, dance, performance, visual art, film, and other forms of media. In the last decades such methods have been emerging in social research, and “can educate, inspire, illuminate, resist, heal, and persuade,” according to Leavy (2009). Art-based research uses methodological tools in which the data per se can start in data generation, analysis, interpretation, and representation (Leavy, 2009, p. ix). Epistolary representational form (letter writing) is the one that interested me the most as a creative way of connecting, in dialogue, the two philosophers of education who inspired my work.

In addition, I cannot study experience directly, I study it through and in its performative representation (Giroux, 2001; Denzin, 2003; Moreira, 2013). The exercise of letter creation and exchange works as a form of agency, a way of bringing into play the two educators’ dispositions (for good and bad) and my own identity as a budding educator.

In the initial stage, three sets of letters were written in Portuguese (Freire) and Italian (Milani) and then translated into English. After listening to the feedback of educators and people who met Milani and Freire, I decided to add my own letter to both educators and revise their first letters, reducing and making them more inquisitive, to add a conversational flavor that was missing in the first versions.

Collecting Material to Write the Letter Exchange

Creating a fictional encounter of both educators long after their death was both an inspiring and challenging—not to mention audacious—way to develop my research. The genre has also a historical and religious significance, especially with regard to Freire and Milani. Both were inspired by Christianity (Mayo, 2007), and both wrote letters and articles that communicated and promoted their literacy methods, as a way to prove that exile could not silence them. This formula somehow resembles Saint Paul's epistolary practices, in which writing letters had a missionary purpose. Of course, Freire and Milani were men of letters because other communication tools, like those we see today, did not exist.

That said, propagation of literacy and religion was not the only similarity between Freire and Milani. Throughout his life and even after his death, Freire received many comments (positive and not) about the Christian perspective in his writings (Byrne, 2011; Elias, 1994; Taylor, 1993). For Elias (1974), Freire delivers a vague and general theory, and sounds at times like a religious preacher who suggests how to improve one's life without explaining much on how to overcome obstacles. Elias also argues that Freire does not mention God as the savior (1974); instead, Freire suggests that each of us can save ourselves through others. In addition, Leonard Boff considers Freire to be one of the founders of Liberation Theology, because of his insights on liberation pedagogy and on language as a means to empower people (Kyrilo, 2011, p. 167). Freire (1984, p. 524) spoke about a prophetic church that dies and is reborn, like Christ, accompanied by theological reflection and hope.

After reading different books and interviews about both men's lives, I collected enough facts about their personalities to believe that Freire would start a conversation with Milani and even give me some suggestions on how to better develop it, Milani might not be as forgiving. As his former teacher collaborator at Barbiana, Adele Corradi, puts it in the title of her book, I do not know if Don Milani would appreciate my impetuous act of writing on his behalf. He might have been even more skeptical considering my audience, for college students, teachers, and professors are quite a different public than the one his school served.

My doubt also springs from the fact that I have moved to academia despite my working-class roots as the daughter of a baker (and later newspaper vendor) and a seamstress, both immigrants with only elementary school education. During the fascist years in Italy and due to poverty and necessity to work to help their families, my mother studied only until third grade and my father until fifth. However, I do believe that Milani would appreciate the fact that my parents were proud of giving me and my siblings what they could not achieve themselves: to go as far as college (and beyond) in our formal education.

Translation Work

Since the beginning of this process, my translation work added another layer to the analytical and writing practices in this research project, illustrating the importance of multilingualism and multiculturalism as tools to access the intersections, dynamism and power relationship in multiple histories. Both Freire and Milani were multilingual men who promoted the importance of the "word," regardless of language and certainly not

restricted to Portuguese or Italian.

My reading practices followed an interesting excursion among countries and languages: Brazil, United States, and Italy. It also means constant effort changing languages and sometimes comparing translated works. I did my best to acquire Freire's books in Portuguese, asking friends and family to mail them. On the other hand, it was also easy to find them in English in practically any library and bookstore in New England.

The ease of finding translated, and original copies of Freire's books allows me the interesting work of sometimes reading in both languages (Portuguese and English) to compare original texts and translations, helping me reflect on his works and recognize his language and narrative style. Often, the ideas in his narrative are not represented in translation. He has special words used in Portuguese that are frequently left out in the language. As part of my work, I carried out a collaborative study with three Smith College students to analyze Freire's best-known book, *Pedagogia do Oprimido* (*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*), in both languages. The book was published in Portuguese or the first time in 1974, after it being published four years earlier in Spanish, English, Italian, French, and German (Freire, 1994).

It is important to remember that translation always mediates between two or more cultures and implies an unbalanced exercise of power, where the translator must always juggle constant decisions (Aixelá, 1996). In my translation work, I shuttled back and forth among three languages (Portuguese, Italian, and English) during the entire process of preparing this dissertation. I made important decisions regarding categories of register

and tone for both authors, in addition to verbatim translations and/or a few adaptations.

For this dissertation, I dealt with translation in two separate moments. The first was with regard to the selection and paraphrasing of quotations and interpretations of both authors' thoughts and statements to create an exchange of letters in each man's native language. The second moment concerned the process of translating these letters from Italian and Portuguese into English. In many ways, it was also a matter of being a cultural translator. Translation is not only about transferring sentences and concepts to a target language, but it is also about making a text function within a new culture (Nikolajeva, 2010; Fernández López, 1996). English lacks diminutives and gender marks in many nouns and adjectives, rendering many adjustments necessary from the originals in Italian and Portuguese. Other difficulties were related to how to deal with humor, especially Milani's sardonic humor, and the Freire's flowery language, abundant with adjectives and full of repetitions to emphasize his ideas.

They were originally teachers in Portuguese and Italian who admired the good use of semantics and grammar, but they were also in touch with many other languages, due to a privileged education in Milani's case and many years of exile in Freire's case. To a certain degree the letters are a way of interweaving moments from Freire's and Milani's lives with my own life while writing and rewriting their biographic past, but they also signal important issues for our present days by highlighting/foregrounding the importance of eco-political-educational collaborations.

The experiences are also strongly charged with a reflection on the current attacks on and criticism of Paulo Freire that first started through a Brazilian movement called

“Escola Sem Partido” around 2013 and that have intensified since the 2018 presidential elections in Brazil that brought to power an extremist, right-wing and conservative party.

Aside from the Brazilian context, scholar Eugene Matusov (2009, 2017) has mentioned what he terms controversial ideas in Freire’s dialogic pedagogy. Matusov states that Freire promotes dialogic critical thinking but also seems to, in Matusov’s opinion, endorse in totalitarian communist thoughts such as those of Vladimir Lenin, Mao Tse Tung, Che Guevara, Fidel Castro, and Amilcar Cabral in *Pedagogy of Opressed* (1986), without criticizing them and helping their educational efforts for state and party-controlled propaganda. He adds that Freire, in his “critical pedagogy” of literacy, brainwashed illiterate African peasants with communist propaganda. Matusov argues that in the 1980s Freire could have acknowledged crimes committed by communist regimes, and he cites Facundo (1984), who questioned the reasons for the lack of success of Freire’s theories in Guinea-Bissau (2009, p.74).

Freire addressed this last issue in a book dialogue with Facundo, *Learning to Question* (1989). There, answering Facundo’s question on the relative failure of the literacy program in Guinea-Bissau, Freire says that one of the features of this political/pedagogical practice was his intransigent position that radical revolutionary education is something to be done *with* the people and not *for* the people. Citing his own work in *Cultural Action for Freedom* (1972), Freire emphasizes the entire community’s participation. Adding further in another book, *Pedagogy in Process: The Letters to Guinea-Bissau* (1978), he insists on the importance of cultural expressions when teaching literacy to students and student participation in curriculum planning (Freire & Facundo,

1989, p.104).

In an interview with Matusov (Shor & all, 2017) during questioning on a similar topic, Shor says that Freire spoke publicly about opposing some positions of the revolutionary regime of Guinea Bissau, such as the use of Portuguese, instead of Creole languages - as the linguistic foundation of its literacy program and schooling. Shor also disagrees with Matusov's claims, arguing that Freire despised dogmatic leftists, calling their methods "injections of revolutionary wisdom," and actively opposed anti-democratic, anti-dialogic leadership on the left, in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*:

Freire himself was a modest and reluctant "icon" who preferred not to lecture at the many forums and assemblies he was invited to. He wanted the people there to pose their own questions and engage each other in robust dialogue about how to consolidate themselves into stronger opposition to the status quo. He knew that he could not direct people politically into action when he had arrived as a stranger from far away. This was the modest posture Freire took throughout the years I traveled and worked with him, when I heard him express dismay at the way the Guinea-Bissau regime handled its literacy program. (Shor & all, 2017, p. 15)

Building a literature review about both educators opens up the discussion on the implications of their work and on how their pedagogies offer insights about convergences and divergences in the critical literacy and pedagogy fields. It is also an attempt to encourage inquiries and/or tensions that can arise from the examination of the scholarship of both educators.

The experiences here presented were also filtered by other scholars' views and sometimes from the arrogance that I noticed from academics and intellectuals who manifest superiority attitudes and/or negative assumptions about Freire's and Milani's work. I use the term "arrogance" here to characterize Milani's lack of interest in academic life or academic approval, as reflected in his writing.

Much in the same way, among his many critics in Italy, Don Milani still has a vehement one: Italian writer Sebastiano Vassalli, who was a middle school teacher during the period that *Letter to a Teacher* became popular in Italy, which was the end of the 1960s. In an article written in 1992 to the Italian newspaper *La Repubblica*, Vassalli says that he worked from 1965 to 1979 as a middle school teacher, when, in his opinion, the public-school system needed policies and competent administrators to enact needed changes, and not the words of a “charismatic teacher” like Milani.

For Vassalli, Milani was only a fad from 1968 because of the book *Letter to a Teacher*, which he insists contains Milani’s only ideas and words. Former students and one of the authors of the book, Martinelli, contested this notion when asked about it. In an informal conversation after his conference at the University of Massachusetts Amherst (2018) about the process of working on the book, Martinelli (personal communication, April 30, 2018) said that the eight students truly collaborated to write the book with Milani.

Vassalli also remarks on Milani’s authoritarian and autocratic tendencies as a teacher. He sees a real connection between the School of Barbiana, the education system in socialist regimes and Milani’s classist view of society. Comparing Milani to Gramsci, Vassalli writes that while the latter also defended strict schools, his ideas were more complex and articulated than Milani’s with regard to formal schooling and culture, and he would not consider, for example, a middle school curriculum as the place for introducing labor contract and union topics. Vassalli also accuses Milani of ditching mathematics and

textbooks and thus leading his followers to eliminate other disciplines, which resulted in the birth the *donmilanism* myth, even though Vassalli recognizes it was not Milani's intention. Milani did not want to be seen as a myth or a saint; his former student Martinelli always highlights this in his presentations.

Vassalli has a long list of faults with Milani and says that *Letter to a Teacher*, with its statistics that were more related to social transformations in post-union Italy and confrontations between the bourgeoisie and proletariat classes, was used to foment distress between teachers and students inside schools. For him that is the key point of the book, which for this reason is now completely unfeasible. For Vassalli, myths like Milani should be put to rest.

At this point, I may expose my own contradictions by bringing my own interpretation of Freire's and Milani's ideas to be discussed in an academic sphere, since this dissertation can be also seen as my own arrogance, influenced by Milani's perspective, for selecting from their books what I believe they could say to each other. But I cannot be neutral, and my choices of selection from theirs and other books are influenced by my sociopolitical commitments or stance

Likewise, it is also a great misconception to expect educators or any type of professional to be politically neutral, for political tendencies are part of the way we have organized our society. Denying one ideology and replacing it with another is not a dialogical exercise; it is the imposition of one view.

Freire and Milani do not seem to impose the specific views of any party, although they certainly did not hide their preferences either. According to Milani, per his former

student Martinelli's recollection, it's "better to be a fascist than indifferent" (Borg & Mayo, 2013). Just as Freire is known for his believe that it is not enough to say that education is a political act (Freire, 1993). Milani did not believe that an educator could not be neutral ideologically but have clear ideas to understand sociopolitical problems (Milani, 1997).

Being self-reflexive about my own work, I naturally would prefer to shed the arrogance of advancing my own political ideologies and invite educators, students and readers to think about the process of becoming agents for a more inclusive interpretive community (Moreira, 2013, p. 2). Therefore, this section, whether it be presumptuous or not, is open to critique, and tries to revitalize Freire's and Milani's words and pedagogical philosophy, as filtered through my experiences as a woman who feels the discomfort and the privileges of living in between cultures and who learns and teaches with the awareness that no social practice is politically neutral.

The initial challenge of creating letters to recipients who will never read them brought me distress, even though I knew they were, in reality, addressed to those who want to know more about the two educators and their ideas in common. As a teacher and doctoral student, this distress manifested as the feeling of being an imposter in academia, rather than someone who can contribute to the construction of knowledge. The article "Making the Road by Walking and Talking" (Luna, Botelho, Fontaine, French, Iverson & Matos, 2004) helped me understand that this feeling is socially constructed within dominant discourses that position teachers as passive recipients of others' expert knowledge, instead of being producers in their own right.

The act of writing is also a method of knowing (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). From a poststructuralist view, the 20th-century movement in philosophy and literary criticism, this type of writing helped me understand myself as a writer with my own particular positions regarding critical literacies and pedagogies. It also helped me analyze the two educators' perspectives, principles and fragilities.

So, after assembling their ideas into letters, I translated them into English. This activity allowed me to explore a cross-language and multicultural aspect of education because it also created a dialogue on critical literacy and radical pedagogies.

There are important similarities in Freire's and Milani's thoughts and methods. Both had great respect for providing formal education to everyone and compassion for the challenges that learners and educators face. Both were also strong opponents to the way nonconforming actors were treated in school systems. Consequently, a study of their scholarship enhanced my knowledge as an educator and informed both my current and future research in critical literacies, multiliteracies and multiculturalism.

Historical Context and Influences

While writing about their lives, I had to take into consideration all the personal changes that affected their views on formal education and perspectives on literacy methods. Kadar (1992, p.12) writes about life writing as a critical practice that problematizes the notion of literature and encourages the reader to develop and foster her or his own self-consciousness to humanize and make less abstract the self-in-the-writing. The author presents life writing more as a comprehensive type of collection and exhibition of materials than as a biography or autobiography.

Freire's and Milani's experiences with communities for defending and promoting literacy were and still are a central tool to transform oppression. Both men were also very outspoken about the Catholic influence on their actions, writings and beliefs. Therefore, I analyze the left-leaning political and Roman Catholic teachings evident in both their lives and training.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Freire and Milani theorized literacy, consciousness, and language empowerment in similar ways.

It is important to contextualize an interesting fact about their lifetime: although they were both born in the early 1920s and started their pedagogical inquiry at the same time, they never met. Milani devoted his life to the Catholic Church, becoming a priest in 1943, at age 22, and Freire married Elza Oliveira in 1944, at the age of 23. Freire became a widower in 1986, and, in 1988, at the age of 67, married Ana Maria Araújo or "Nita." She is the daughter of the high school principal who gave Freire a scholarship to study there and, right after graduating, his first job as a teacher.

Adele Corradi, author of *I do not know if Don Lorenzo* (2012), was one of the first educators to realize the similarities between Freire and Milani and the power of their work, but not until after Milani's death. Corradi was a teacher who collaborated with Milani volunteering for four years at the School of Barbiana. She mentions in a newspaper interview (Lo Straniero, 2012) that Freire would have called Milani a "radical" because she understood that for Freire a person can be either a radical or a sectarian. In her opinion, sectarians have short roots and hold themselves to rules and dogmas and radicals have deeper roots and are not afraid of freedom.

In another interview (Fofi, 2012), Corradi said she did not believe that Milani heard about Freire. She never heard Milani talking about the Brazilian educator, so the confrontation of Freire's and Milani's ideas was only possible later. However, when she first read an interview with Freire, she thought the two men could be related because Freire's ideas were very familiar: radicalism as a principle, convictions, and religious faith. Only after reading Freire's words about radicals with deep roots did she understand where Milani's freedom of thinking and action came from.

Corradi explained, however, that one can also talk about Milani's radical way in a different direction than Freire because his educational method was very severe, and he expected the best from his students. He was also very open to dialogue, as Corradi added, but he would not accept criticism from an outside person visiting or observing lessons at school. So, here we start the challenge of imagining what they could have written to each other after experiencing their journeys before, during, and after the period of their life dedicated to the field of education.

The Missing Encounter Between Freire and Milani

Freire and Milani were exiled in Europe due to their attempts to increase access for children and adults marginalized by the educational and political systems, who they called the oppressed or "gli ultimi" (the last ones) of the world. However, this coincidence was not enough to inspire someone to host a meeting between the two.

Both wrote numerous letters that later became books. They also published books that became references for educators worldwide. Milani is not currently known in Brazil, but he was even less so in the 1960s, although I did find a mention of the time that the

priest was facing trial for being accused of promoting conscientious objection. Milani was mentioned twice in the Brazilian paper *Correio da Manhã*, on February 17, 1966 and May 19, 1968.

The first article is on his position against the punishment of conscientious objectors and the latter one is about the radicalism in his actions and importance of the book *Letter to a Teacher* (1966). Freire was in exile, away from Brazil, during this period and probably did not have access to these articles.

The only apparent contact among them happened when Freire was invited to write an epilogue in a book called *Don Milani nella scrittura collettiva* (1992), title that can be translated as *Don Milani on Collective Writing*, written by one of Milani's students, Francesco Gesualdi, with José Luis Corso Toral. This epilogue makes it clear that Freire was being introduced in the beginning of the 1990s to Milani's work. On the other hand, Milani never met or knew of Freire because he died at the young age of 44, in 1967. The many possible encounters were also part of my inquiry as I did my research.

Freire was an educational consultant for the World Council of Churches from 1970 to 1979 in Switzerland. Because he was in a Christian institution it is possible that in some moment, he heard about Milani's life and work as a priest-educator, but so far, there is no evidence of such knowledge. There is also no evidence that Freire heard about Milani and his work as a priest in the parishes of San Donato in Calenzano, near Florence and Sant'Andrea in Barbiana, on Mount Giovi, where he started the School of Barbiana.

Inquiring about Freire and Milani promotes a dialogue between them and allows us to understand the ways that their pedagogies converge and diverge and also consider

these insights vis-a-vis social justice work in schools and communities.

Yet, in reading about their lives, it is important to notice how both, while dedicated to working with the poor, shuffle between their bourgeoisie and working/rural class lives, sometimes acting like Robin Hood, sometimes acting as individuals familiar with dominant class practices and who benefit from their positions.

Gramsci's ideas influenced Freire's and Milani's beliefs, reflections and actions. In his famous quote from *Prison Letters*, from December 19, 1929, Gramsci says, "I'm a pessimist because of intelligence, but an optimist because of will" (Gramsci, 1986). This statement can also apply to educators' beliefs and impetus because despite facing many challenges – legal issues, exile, criticism – their answer to all was the will to invest their strength and lives in education.

This statement also resounds with many of educators who are following the current political situations in Brazil, Italy and the United States. Commonsense in these countries is being attacked by conservative ideological values, but the optimism and will of most educators are resisting this wave that seems to reflect a shadow of fascist neo-liberal ideas toward schools. From the data gathered for this work, I feel strongly that education still does and always will help build a more just and solidary society.

The preliminary reflection about Gramsci's ideas guided me in the process of looking for the bibliography to better understand the ways that Freire and Milani are reinterpreted today as well as the opportunity to revisit their most significant work and sources of inspiration. In this journey, reading the materials was important, but so was listening to oral histories and remembrances from people who had the chance to study,

live and socialize with Freire and Milani.

Biographies

To contextualize and understand Freire's and Milani's lives and contemporary historical context, I offer brief biographies. The sets of letters provide additional details about their lives as in their content I presented themes like radical pedagogy and importance of the word in the world, Freire's and Milani's ways of being educators, and education/ teaching as a political act.

Paulo Freire

The Brazilian Paulo Freire, née Paulo Regius Neves Freire, was the youngest of four children. He was born in the City of Recife, State of Pernambuco, on September 19, 1921. His father, Joaquim Temistocles Freire, was an army sergeant and his mother, Edeltrudes Neves Freire, a pious Catholic woman who worked mostly at home taking care of the house and children, completed high school and was fluent in French. She sometimes worked as a seamstress as well. Paulo learned to read and write with his parents and attended a small private elementary school.

Freire says that his first readings of the world happened in the backyard of his first house, under the shadows of fruit trees and playing with his pets. In this way, his mother taught him to read and writing in the dirt with little wooden sticks, then breaking the words into syllables, and finally reading the written words on the ground. His father was a police officer, who later became a captain. However, due to arterial sclerosis, he had to retire early and, at the same time, provide for the family. Occasionally he worked as a carpenter doing woodwork that he would rarely sell.

He also tried to resell goods that he would bring from the interior of the State of Pernambuco, but he wasn't successful. Nevertheless, these difficulties allowed his father to be very close to his children, having long conversations about important themes related to Brazilian politics and history. He was not a religious man, but he believed in God. Freire's mother was a devout Catholic, and, for that reason, he grew up in the religion that influenced his life's perspective, pedagogical theories, and activism.

After his first experiences learning with his mother, Freire went to a private school at the age of six. There, his teacher Eunice was the reason he started liking school. Freire used to say that she showed him that the main goal was not to memorize grammar concepts but develop oral and written skills. (Kirylo, 2011).

During the most difficult times the family moved to the interior of Pernambuco, to the City of Jaboatão. When Freire was 13, his father passed away. Freire initially had difficulty succeeding at school due to poor nourishment. His mother was able to obtain a scholarship for Freire to attend high school in the capital, Recife. As mentioned above, he later taught Portuguese at the same school. He was also able to complete law school but did not want to practice criminal law. His interest was in working as a teacher for social justice in education. He worked with *Serviço Social da Indústria* (SESI), a private institution that provides all kinds of health and wellbeing services for industry workers, where he developed his interest in adult literacy.

Freire's innovative pedagogy of teaching people to read in 45 days or less was rooted in the students' lived experiences. This project, which Freire described as "a progressive experience" years later, started in the small village of Angicos in 1963, where

Freire taught reading and writing to 300 people while they discussed local and national problems (Streck, 2008). The practices of reading and writing also helped many people gain the right to vote, since only literate people could participate in the electoral process.

Freire's method was initially welcomed by the democratic government in Brazil, and President João Goulart went personally to visit the program. With the military coup in 1964, the freedom of working in a program that empowered people through literacy was not accepted by the new government. Freire was considered subversive, and his educational system harmful for the country.

In 1968, he had to leave Brazil and only returned 15 years later. The military called him an enemy of God and country. He spent his years in exile in Bolivia, passing through Chile, the United States, and finally Switzerland. In 1980, after the Amnesty Law, he was able to return to Brazil. These 15 years in exile were prolific in terms of his academic growth and international recognition. Back in Brazil, he joined the Labor Party and during mayor Luiza Erundina's administration of São Paulo, he served as director of the city's board of education, from 1989 to 1991.

Lorenzo Milani

Lorenzo Domenico Carlo Milani Comparetti, who always preferred to present himself as Lorenzo Milani, was born in Florence on May 27th, 1923 to an economically privileged and formally educated family. Milani was born a few months after the fascist government of Benito Mussolini took power in Italy, a reign that lasted until 1943. Milani was the second of three children.

His parents were Alice Weiss and Albano Milani. His mother, a formally

educated woman who took English classes with James Joyce, was an agnostic, non-practicing Jew and daughter of a Jew of Bohemian origins. His father, a chemistry university professor with a passion for literature, was an atheist. Milani's paternal great grandfather, Domenico Comparetti, was a famous Italian philologist married to the pedagogue Elena Raffalovich, a Russian Jew interested to the pedagogy of Frobel. Laura Comparetti was his paternal grandmother, from whom the surname Comparetti came. Because of fascism in Italy, Milani's parents were advised to baptize their three children and, later, have a religious matrimonial ceremony in the Catholic Church to avoid persecution (Fallaci, 1974).

Milani grew up around books, literature, and music appreciation and was a free-minded student, who did not conform to school and managed to skip one year in high school. Due to the 1929 world financial crisis, in 1930 the family moved to Milano where Milani's father accepted a corporate job. After high school, to the great disappointment of his family, Milani decided to study art instead of enrolling in a university. In 1942, the family returned to Florence because of the war and Milani started to take art classes with a German painter who influenced his appreciation for religious themes in art.

He understood at a young age that he wanted to be near Christianity, even though he grew up in a non-religious family environment and with a non-practicing Jewish mother. His interest in sacred painting inspired him to learn more about the gospel and at age 20 he converted to Catholicism (see his biography at the Fondazione Lorenzo Milani website). His spiritual father in the conversion process was Don Raffaele Bensi. His conversion soon became a devotion, and in 1943, Milani started his sacerdotal training at

the Maggiore Seminary in Florence on July 13th, 1947 he became a priest. No one from his family attended the ceremony (Fallaci,1974).

Like Freire, Milani's journey of becoming a teacher started as a calling - in this case, a second calling during his priesthood. When he was a helper-priest, in his first mission after the Seminary, in San Donato di Calenzano, near Florence, he created an evening school for workers and peasants devoid of all religious symbols (Mayo, 2007, p. 528). There he developed catechism lessons through a historical outlook: one would learn about the Jewish population, about Jesus's life, and about the history of Christian education instead of the dogmatic formulas from the Church. He also founded public evening classes for young workers and peasants from the parish.

This project for the evening school was organized after being recognized by the school council. The courses were held during the week and on Fridays the students would have conferences on diverse themes. Many friends helped with this project. The youngsters were obsessed with the disciplines that they judged useful to receive their diplomas, such as technical design, arithmetic, stenography, and geometry - all very helpful when applying for work in the railway system. It was in the San Donato di Calenzano parish where Milani also started to write his first book *Esperienze Pastorali* (Pastoral Experiences), published in 1958. It is a detailed sociological work that shows many ethnographic elements of observations and findings on the way that the population of his parish was living at the time.

Milani stayed in Calenzano until 1954, when the Florence Catholic Congregation decided to send him to a locality in the mountains in Tuscany: Barbiana. This move was

somewhat of an exile because of his radical teaching ideology at the evening school in Calenzano. Milani's controversial ideas about the political rationale to vote for the Democratic Christian Party, as recommended by the church, versus giving preference to unionists and lay representatives, was too uncomfortable for the Tuscan Curia. Thus, on September 12, 1954, after Don Daniele Pugi, the priest and protector with whom he worked, passed away, Milani was sent to exile. The Curia (high church representatives in Tuscan) thought they could thus silence Milani, but instead the move allowed him to further spread his work in the field of education as a form of awareness or *consciousness* that demanded more attention for the oppressed students who had been rejected by the public-school system.

In the mountains Milani became even more outspoken as a priest, discussing and fighting for civil rights through numerous letters and articles published during his short life. He also strongly defended his ideas about the right to conscientiously object to the military draft, which can be read in his letters to judges and military chaplains. He died on June 26th, 1967, from Hodgkin's disease, at age 44 (Fondazione Lorenzo Milani website). Unfortunately, after his death, the School of Barbiana did not survive, but Milani's ideas, letters, and books started to attract interest from many Italians.

A few points about Milani's books and about the School of Barbiana can shine more light on his character. The first book *Esperienze Pastorali*, or *Pastoral Experiences*, was published in April 1958. In December of the same year the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith deemed it inconvenient, forbidding all sales, reprints, and translations. After over half a century, in 2014, Pope Francis rescinded the order and

allowed the book's publication. *Pastoral Experiences* is a sociological study, and according to Milani it was a way to acknowledge that it would do no good for one to help take people to heaven or teach them the gospel if they are unable to understand how discourse is used by the ruling classes.

Pastoral Experiences is the result of Milani's observations and experience during his seven years as chaplain of the San Donato di Calenzano parish. There, before creating the People's School, he noticed the oppressed classes lacked empowerment through discourse, something that could improve their living conditions. Gathering the information and writing the book helped Milani better understand the population he was serving as priest. His introduction also mentions that he believed the book could help remind young seminary students to engage with their community before arriving in their rural or working-class parishes packed with books that would actually distance them from the reality on the ground.

The book was modest and comprised of ecclesiastic pastoral techniques, reserved exclusively to an audience of priests. However, many lay people became curious about its content and it was criticized by several of his religious colleagues as well. For his part, Milani said he felt at peace regarding the issue and that he had proceeded exactly according to order: he had delivered a manuscript to his spiritual father Raffaele Bensi, who validated it with the imprimatur by Bishop Elia Dalla Costa and with a very committed preface by Camerino archbishop Monsignor Giuseppe D'Avack.

Indeed, what was Milani doing that could represent a danger in the field of social studies? Educating people? When people asked Milani what his teaching method in San

Donato was, he often answered that in rural and working-class communities one shouldn't worry about knowing what to "do" with teaching, but rather how to "be." Milani argues it was necessary to have clear ideas regarding social and political problems, and not be neutral in the face of class differences (Milani, 1997, p. 239). He said one must feel passionate—as if there were a burning flame inside—for the cause of lifting the poor out of poverty. He was not talking about just the corporate world; his vision was wider: he was calling for a more human, more spiritual, more Christian approach.

Before he finished writing the book, Milani was sent in exile to Monte Giovanni where the small church of Saint Andrea of Barbiana is located, in Tuscany. During his time in San Donato, he had also been accused of not having a crucifix in class and of intentionally not talking about religion. Milani's goals and results should be seriously examined. Communists and Christian Democrats attended the school together for years. For most of them there was no dividing wall, and no worshipping of parties and newspapers. Esteem for Milani's unassailable objective view had greatly increased.

Despite the remoteness of Barbiana, Milani did not consider the move a punishment; he did not consider his wings to have been clipped. "The greatness of a life is not measured by the greatness of the place where it happened, but from very different things. Not even the possibility of doing good can be measured from the number of parishioners," he wrote once in a letter to his mother (Milani Comparetti, 1973, p.118).

Before Milani even arrived in Barbiana, the school had already been born, for some 'Barbianans' had already come to visit him in San Donato. Milani was soon

enjoying teaching in the mountains. In the initial phase, classes were in the evening, and later on it became a day school for students who had been expelled from the public-school system. In the new school, everything was new, everything was welcome, everything was exciting. It was enough to have a meeting each evening, and students were so busy and thrilled that they often stayed until 11 pm or midnight. A variety of materials were used. For example, one evening Milani worked with bank account slips; another one money order forms; another one, telegrams; one more, town hall forms. Activities were also varied: one evening they drew up the school's blueprint and the other they talked about complex political issues. They also analyzed the same event as reported in 15 different self-proclaimed independent newspapers to ascertain the publications' true agendas.

This was the beginning. The evening school became a full-time independent and non-governmental school absolutely free of charge and open to all. The schedule was eleven hours a day, 365 days a year. For years, it was the only secondary school in the small village of Vicchio, to which Barbiana belongs, and the only school with mechanical drawing courses approved by the Technical Instruction Consortium.

Because of its schedule, the school had a total of 4 thousand hours of instruction per year, as opposed to the 600 hours at public schools. The students learned also modern languages. First Italian and then the languages that were achievable with the help of records, foreigners' visits, and many trips abroad for exchange programs at the age of 13, 14, and 15. The school did not have recreational hours or sports. Skiing was offered, as was swimming, after they built a small pool. Milani did not consider these two sports, but

rather pedagogical tools important for life.

Set of Letters

This section is the core of my critical literature review. After presenting my letter to both educators at the beginning of this chapter, I bring here the constructed of six letters exchanged between Freire and Milani. Through the letters, I present and represent a not common practice for writing literature reviews.

Within the letters, though, I used the standard APA form of citing sources to connect the reader to the dialogue in the field. In the letters, I talk about the men's work and the importance of radical pedagogy and "Word in the World". Through their trajectories, I try to signal central traces of their work: voice to the oppressed, teaching critical thinking, and perpetuating the good use of the word in the places where they worked. I also try to disclose their political views and explain why teaching is a political act.

My interest in connecting Freire's and Milani's philosophies is an attempt to create an interpretive framework through an exploratory study, first by looking at similar philosophies of education. There are many layers that build this project to arrive to center which is hands-on approach of teaching critical consciousness, to discover how these concepts are current today and brought to life in various educational settings. This framework means that the art of raising consciousness is at the center of the entire discussion.

This encounter will never happen, yet the intellectual work has started and can expand. I have been connecting their ideas and looking for more pedagogical radical

philosophers for the last four years. In this search I came across Peter Mayo's and some of his colleagues' works from the University of Malta. The approach of these Malta scholars is more theoretical than mine. Mayo published an article entitled "Critical Approaches to Education in the Work of Lorenzo Milani and Paulo Freire" (2007), in which he presents side by side some theories and ideas of both educators. For him the main theme explored in this writing is the analysis of education for social justice based on critical literacy (p. 527).

Mayo responded to my inquiries and has been a great inspiration for my own work of expanding into practices and current interpretations of their approaches, including public schools. Another outcome was a 2018 meeting between Ira Shor and Edoardo Martinelli, "disciples" and former students of Freire and Milani, respectively, at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

With school observations, ethnographic methods, and experience as my great allies, in the above letter I was trying to also dialogue with Freire and Milani by understanding where the actions/practices are and how they are represented, which is shown in Chapter 4. As is common in the academic world, in my opinion, it was easy to find the theories, analyses about, and written reflections on the words of both men, and these constitute great materials for the exercise of inventing/dreaming with a dialogue. The words are in books, in the libraries, in the seminars, so what about the action? Where can we find that?

I chose to start the representational letters in an asymmetric way—i.e., not replicating or mirroring the content in each two-letter set because I wanted to respect and

frame the letters with my own perceptions and interpretations of their personalities.

Milani, for example, felt a pressing need to always be productive in his school, answering letters and sending the students abroad, among other activities, because of his fragile health. Freire did not have such urgency. Another difference is that Freire often wrote in first person singular in his books, while Milani and his students, in their most known book wrote collectively, *Letter to a Teacher* from 1967, chose a fictional voice (Gianni's voice, representing all oppressed students) to be the narrator in their memorable book

My main sources of information for writing Milani's letters were the website for the Fondazione Don Lorenzo Milani, whose president was Michele Gesualdi, one of Milani's students and protégées, who, like his brother Francesco, was adopted by the priest. I also consulted Milani's biographies in the books written by Fallaci (1974) and Lancisi (2013) and my conversations online, by phone, and in person with Nanni Banchi and Edoardo Martinelli.

To write Freire's letter, I used Gadotti's (1994), Kyrilo's (2011), and Freire's (2014) books, my classes online with Professor Gadotti, through the Instituto Paulo Freire in São Paulo, and my notes from a presentation by Ira Shor in November 2012, at the former Marks Meadow School of Amherst, MA, a building that today is part of the College of Education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

The title of Shor's talk was "Occupy/Freire: Democracy-in-Progress, Democracy Attacked, 1964 and 2011." I also used the São Paulo Teachers' Union online magazine, which is called *Revista Giz*, and Freire's own stories in his book *Letters to Cristina* (2000). Mayo (2007) and Streck (2008) were also important sources for bringing both

Freire's and Milani's biographies together.

The constructed letters presented here are not my first versions. In the first versions, Milani and Freire talked about their families and their childhood years, whereas in the second versions I decided to concentrate on their dedication to critical literacy and radical thoughts concerning pedagogy. Their biographies were presented separately and no longer in epistolary form. Nevertheless, I want to register here that Freire always talked more about his family situation while Milani created, with his simple and Franciscan style of life, a distance from his bourgeois past. It was easier to find references to his family through another person's account.

Another point to take in consideration that makes a slightly difference in my letter creation process was the fact that Freire came across Milani's ideas after the exile. At the time, Freire was serving as secretary of education in São Paulo during the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (Labor Party) administration in this important Brazilian city. One of Milani's former students and foster child, Francuccio Gesualdi, asked Freire to write the epilogue of a book about collective writing, one of the techniques of the School of Barbiana.

In a 2016 interview, Nanni Banchi, president of the *Centro Formazione e Ricerca Don Lorenzo Milani e Scuola di Barbiana* (Center for Training and Research on Don Lorenzo Milani and the School of Barbiana), told me that he was one of the people who suggested to Gesualdi that he contact Freire. Freire accepted and wrote the epilogue in a form of dialogue with his colleague Ana Maria Sarau. In the book, Freire agrees that their ideas have always met (Gesualdi & Toral, 1992):

[...] school politicization, the limits of education within social change, the need to combat the bourgeois ideology that forged the model of human beings and that oppresses the poor, marginalized [Milani and me] internally in the system. Our ideas coincide in terms of valuing experience and freedom, and in terms of the question of science in a rationalized perspective. (p. 93)

The letter at end of the book about collective writing in the School of Barbiana made me believe that communication between the two philosophers of education would be a powerful element in the process with which many of us are involved, which is creating conditions to improve education, spread social justice, and increase consciousness raising through applying in praxis what Freire's and Milani's theories and ideas inspired, while adapting them to our times.

Drawing on the work of O'Sullivan (1999, p.7), I refer to this movement as transformative learning, which can happen based on a Freire and Milani pedagogy and in which the appropriate framework must be a consciousness for all of humanity, where we must educate to survive, critique, and create.

Comrade Don Lorenzo,

This letter touches upon real facts but is mostly based on the dreams of an educator-ethnographer who wants to see realized the vision of a dialogue between us. Although we have never met, I have heard about you. I wrote the epilogue for *Don Milani nella Scrittura Collettiva* which was written by your former student, Francesco Gesualdi with the priest and educator José Luis Corzo Toral, and published in 1992. Through this experience I realized the similarity in our thoughts and ideas on education.

I understand, like you do, that literacy and the good use of the "word" would be the way to help oppressed people react to an oppressive system. Such understanding emerged through my decision to dedicate my life to pedagogy. It happened early in my life, while still in high school, when I noticed that I liked to study grammar. This transformation started as a student and continued as a teacher.

I wanted to master my own language, Portuguese. I bought books by solid Brazilian and Portuguese grammarians in secondhand bookstores. These texts allowed me to give lessons before even receiving a teaching certificate. Like it happened for you after the

end of your seminary studies, the call to be an educator was stronger than my law diploma.

I finish this letter by asking you to tell me about your interest in centralizing your teaching in literacy and language learning. When and how did you realize the importance of words for changing your students' lives?

Looking forward to continuing this conversation, I sent my best regards

Paulo

Dear Professor Freire,

Since I started the evening school for young people and adults in Calenzano, language learning has been the central part of my way of teaching because only language can bring equality. Equality is achieved when someone knows how to express him/herself and understand the other when he/she expresses him/herself. This is true regardless of whether someone is rich or poor.

*The important issue is to speak, as we emphasize in the book *Lettera a una professoressa* (1975).*

I used to teach the language, but also the celestial nebulae, sheet music, people's geography, and geometric perspective in drawing. No argument was taboo, not even sexual education, like when I explained, for example, chromosomes and genetic transferal to students aged 12 and 13. I always believed one's poverty can be measured through one's level of culture and social functioning, and not through bread, shelter, or heat (Fallaci, 1974).

Nevertheless, during many years the main subjects I taught to peasants and workers were literacy or language appreciation. I was teaching their own language and world languages. I would stop on each word to discuss its etymology. I would make students think about the words as beings who had been born and then developed, transformed, and reshape themselves.

The word is the fair key that opens every door. I knew that the difference between my students and the rich students was not the quantity nor the quality of the treasure in their hearts and minds, but that words, in and of themselves, were the threshold between inside and outside (Milani, 1970, pp. 57-59). Now, I'd like to know your perspective, Professor. What did teach literacy to adults mean to you?

Warm greetings,

Lorenzo Milani

Dear D. Milani,

Your work represents an important legacy that echoed strongly in Italy and today gains force around the world. I want to register here a basic parallel between our work. I also saw the importance of words through critical literacy, understanding the power behind writing well and clearly, and its role in earning respect in society. My literacy work was inspired in teaching illiterate adults how to read and write while providing them consciousness about their value in the world as capable citizens who can vote and fight for their rights.

After reading about the creative writing projects at Barbiana, I understood it to be a lucid school, and many of its visions seem to coincide with mine: the politicizing of education and its limits with regard to social changes, the need to fight bourgeois ideology that forged the 20th-century model of oppressing the poor, marginalizing them within the system, the valuing of experience and freedom, and the issue of science in rationalist thought (Gesualdi & Toral, 1992).

Words are what make us human. In Pedagogy of the Oppressed (2014), I wrote that existence, because it is human, cannot be muted or silenced. Neither can it feed itself with fake words. Learning to pronounce the world helps one to become an inquirer for the subjects that detain the pronouncing world, claiming from them a new way of being pronounced. It is not in silence that the humans forge themselves, but in words, in work, in reflected action.

It is in this manner that we can foster education that frees consciousness without fostering education that domesticates and promotes naivety. People had found themselves in a state of isolation from our society because they do not have a history of decisive experiences, but they are now emerging, uncrossing their arms, renouncing simple spectatorship and demanding participation (Freire, 2014, p.108).

To finalize this letter, I leave here some questions from my book Education for Critical Consciousness (Freire, 2005), which discusses education through dialogue and communication that is perceived as a threat by oppressors and authoritarian minds. "How can educators and pupils possibly be put on par in the search for knowledge if it is the former who already knows? How can students be said to be capable of knowing if their role is to learn from the educator?" These observations always originate with those who consider themselves to be the possessors of wisdom vis-a-vis students, who are regarded as ignorant.

With your blessings,

Power relations and struggles marked Freire's and Milani's background. They both noticed the role that language played in social relations, which made literacy central to their scholarship. Similar to Foucault's perspective, both educators understood early how words can be powerful and transformative. Both authors understood and experienced the consequences of word appropriation to manipulate people through fascist and dictatorial authority. They were also profoundly touched by poverty while growing up, albeit in different contexts.

Poverty marked the development of their radical literacy and both men fought for social justice for the lower classes, using the same weapon that they taught their students to manage: the word. Freire experienced deprivation growing up, but having access to formal education led him to a more privileged life. Milani, on the other hand, renounced privilege in order to dedicate his life to the poor of Tuscany. Like Saint Francis of Assisi, he renounced his wealth to embrace a religious calling (Lancisi, 2013, p. 22) that then led him to a pedagogical vocation.

Freire used his adult privileged life in defense of formal education starting with the most basic steps: helping adults to read and write, and thereby achieving the right to vote and change their lives. For his many deeds, Freire reached the status of an intellectual known worldwide.

Don Milani is well known only in Italy, where he was not acclaimed as an intellectual (Lancisi, 2013, p. 14) despite his innumerable writings (especially letters and

articles for newspapers) on critical consciousness. The focus on discourse and on its relations with power, ideologies, and social identities works also as a methodology to uncover Freire's and Milani's beliefs and ideals and to better develop the exercise of letter creation to bring them closer.

Both Milani and Freire seemed to maintain good relationships with their families while living in exile. Milani had a beautiful relationship with his mother that is captured in the letters he wrote to her while in seminary and later in the two parishes where he worked.

Radical Pedagogy and Importance of the Word in the World

This section is about the knowledge produced by both educators. Most excerpts are chosen from four important books by Freire and Milani: *Esperienze Pastorali* (*Pastoral Experiences*), D. Milani's first book and *Lettera a una professoressa* (*Letters to a Teacher*) written collectively by Milani and eight of his students at the School of Barbiana under his supervision. The latter was written in the 1960s and published in 1967.

The books written by Freire and analyzed here are *Teachers as Cultural Workers: Letters to those who dare teach*, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and *Letters to Cristina – Reflections on My Life and My Praxis*. The titles in Portuguese are *Pedagogia do Oprimido*; *Professora sim, tia não: cartas para quem ousa ensinar*; *Cartas a Cristina – Reflexões sobre minha vida e minha práxis*. I also used parts of letters written by Freire and Milani to various people.

Freire and Milani both worked with the same ideal of helping oppressed people to

search for and fight for their place in society as protagonists, through education (Mayo, 2007; Streck, 2008). In talking, writing, and finally publishing their words and actions—creating and engaging their ideologies—both were putting theory into practice and making a great contribution to the field of critical literacy. Their approach to marginalized peoples and their outspokenness against the privileged was a starting point in drawing attention to the issue.

Therefore, the aim in this second fictional exchange of letters presents the main points of the above-named works. In these representational letters, it is important to remember the status of the author-educators and conditions under which their texts were prepared either before, during, or—in Freire’s case only, because Milani never moved away from Barbiana, going back to Firenze occasionally only to visit family or for medical appointments—after their exiles. The accusation of being subversive and inquisitive plays an important role in the choice of words in the books, letters, and articles that both men wrote.

Dear Professor,

*The answer to your questions can be found in the book *Letter to a Teacher* (1967; 1996), written by eight of my students under my supervision. It is an invitation to organize ourselves and to understand that school does not have to be a sacrifice, but a privilege tailored to all: city and mountain people’s children and executive, worker, and peasants’ children.*

*Despite the idea that the School of Barbiana was centered on my figure, I owe everything that I know to the young workers and peasants with whom I worked, for while I have taught them to express themselves, they have taught me to live. At Barbiana, students were both teacher and learner, as they stated in *Letter to a Teacher* “There was just one copy of each book. The boys would pile up around it. It was hardly noticeable that one of them was a bit older and was teaching.*

*The oldest of these teachers was sixteen. The youngest was twelve and filled me with admiration. I made up my mind from the start that I, too, was going to teach (*School of Barbiana*, 1969, p.*

8). *The students were also professors and the so-called big professors were never very welcomed in Barbiana. My treatment toward the snooping people who would come to visit us was not always the most welcoming. I give one example, that explains why.*

Once a professor came to visit us and said to me: "You, reverend, have not studied pedagogy. Polianski says sports are a physical and psychological necessity..." for pupils. He talked without looking at us [students]. One who teaches pedagogy at the university does not need to look at the students. She or he knows everything by memory, just like we memorize the multiplication table. Finally, the big professor left and Lucio, who had 36 cows in the barn to take care of, said: 'The school will always be better than cow manure' (Scuola di Barbiana 1996, p.13). You, Professor, might also have heard of my ill reputation circling in parlors. For example, I have been called unbearable and rude for sending away visitors with an urban-bourgeois-intellectual-scholar education who after 10 minutes started teaching us instead of learning from us.

Our learning project was based on solidarity, and we had a sign with our untranslatable motto from the best American youngsters "I care; it is in my heart." This is exactly the opposite of the fascist motto, "I do not care" (Galleotti 2008, p.37)."
Near the English sign, we also had one in Spanish:

*"Yo scribo – I write
Porque me gusta estudiar – Because I like to study
El niño – the child
Que no estudia – who does not study
No es buen – is not a good
Revulocionario – revolutionary."*

In sum, I have much more to say, but I will stop here to ask you how you got involved in politics, and specifically with the Brazilian Labor party?

*Warm greetings,
Your Lorenzo Milani*

Sant'Andrea di Barbiana Prior

*Dear D. Lorenzo,
I had never presented myself as political analyst and I have always written from an educator's point of view. However, as I said in *Politics and Education* (1985), it is not enough to say that education is a political act, just as it is not enough to say that the political act is also educational. It is necessary to recognize the political aspect of*

education. I cannot think of myself as a progressive person if I do not understand the space of the school as a neutral environment, with some relationship to class battles in which the students are seen only as learners of certain objects of knowledge to which we loan a magic power (Freire, 2001).

The dominant class do not want to hear about the necessity of a critical reading of the world, insisted on purely technical training for the working class. They also do not divide technical training from political training, nor reading the world from reading discourse, as I wrote once in to my niece Cristina (Freire, 2000). I learned this in 1947, while working for SESI, or Social Services for Businesses, an entity managed by the ruling class. I would be naïve to think that SESI was created to help the working class. There, I was in a kind of contradiction, but this experience allowed me to develop further political-pedagogical work that influenced my life because it was considered subversive. These activities were “Movimento de Cultura Popular,” or simply MCPL, “Serviço de Extensão Cultural,” and finally an adult literacy project in Angicos, in the state of Rio Grande do Norte (Freire, 2000).

With regard to my political inclinations, I can tell you that I did not feel that I should be shy, reserved, or careful in order to affirm myself as a progressive or as a leftist. My progressive perspective implied or revealed, on the one hand, an ethical position, a nearly instinctive inclination for what is fair, a visceral rejection to what is unfair, such as discrimination based on race, class, or sex, a rejection of violence and exploitation. On the other hand, because it was ideas-based, my perspective implied or revealed a type of knowledge not gained from books, but from anti-books, anti-theory.

Reading revolutionary thinkers helped me, especially the ones who were not dogmatic. They provided a scientific basis on which to reaffirm my political views and my ethical position. When people asked me how I reached the poor parts of Recife I'd say that I was moved by my friendship with Christ, while directed to that tragic reality by Marx. and arrived there to that tragic reality I was directed to Marx. Thus, my experience with Marx has never distanced me from Christ (Freire, 2000).

As a Catholic Marxist, I was also an enthusiast of liberation theology, a movement that reflects on the role of the Catholic Church in places where socio-economic gaps caused suffering. The theologians know well that the oppressed, as a social class that is prohibited to speak its truth, still hope for a future that does not repeat their present. Their future is the concretization of their liberation; without it, their very “being” would not be possible (Freire, 1978). Moreover, I always asserted that religion, from the Latin verb “religare” and that concentrates in this sense transcendental human relations, should never be an instrument of alienation (Freire, 1973).

Nevertheless, my friendship with Christ was not enough to avoid my exile. Or maybe it was meant to be like this precisely because of our friendship. The military and whoever else were behind the coup decided that I was the enemy of God and the homeland.

In 1980, when I returned to Brazil, I became a member of the Workers Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores or PT) and I became the Municipal Secretary of Education in São Paulo in 1989. We created the Literacy Movement (MOVA) and a program to support community rooms, called Education for Young People and Adults (EJA), that still exists in many places in Brazil (Gadotti & Abrão, 2012).

I supported Luis Inácio Lula da Silva, known simply as Lula, for presidency in 1989. He was a unionist from PT and candidate for the first public elections after 20 years of military rule. He almost won and if it had happened, I would have been invited to be the Minister of Education (Horton & Freire, 1990). However, Lula only won the presidency in 2002.

In conclusion, I believe what moves a real revolutionary is the recognition that revolution is an act of love, because it creates and liberates. What makes a revolutionary connect to oppressed people if not the inhumane conditions in which they find themselves? Che Guevara said once: “Dejeme decirle a riesgo de parecer ridiculo que el verdadero revolucionario es animado por fuertes sentimientos de amor. Es imposible pensar un revolucionário autêntico, sin esta cualidad” which means, “let me say something, at the risk of sounding ridiculous: a real revolutionary is motivated by strong feelings of love. It is impossible to conceive of an authentic revolutionary without this quality” (Freire, 1983).

Dear Milani, how about your affiliations with political parties and with the Catholic church? Tell me about your experiences.

Warmest greetings and your blessings, my dear reverend!

Paulo

Dear Professor,

I have never been affiliated with any political party, but I have defended causes that I considered important for the wellbeing of the poor. I taught the Barbiana pupils that other people's problems are like our own problems. Rising above the problem together is a political act; stepping out alone is greed. This is one of the teachings mentioned in Letter to a Teacher (1996).

I was called a communist and a red priest a few times. I was not neutral, but I was neither a communist nor red. We cannot be communist, but we should not look at communism as an enemy we have to defeat, to consume; far from it, it is a case of Christianizing. Defeating communism seems to me to oppose history, which means going against God, because he is the one who designs/writes history. However, saying this does not mean that I am a communist (Pecorini, 1996, p. 321).

Communism brings with its fundamental errors but also brings some generosity and some fundamental truths, such as concern for the poor and love for the oppressed. Committing yourself to help another person is acting in a more Christian way than wasting your life distracting yourself with entertainment, even under the protection of a priest (Lancisi, 2013, p. 77).

Once I said to a young communist man from my parish that it was necessary to defend workers from everyone's, including the priest's, instructions. Then, before God, I also promised to all my students in Calenzano to only give them instruction and always to tell them the truth about anything, whether or not it suited or dishonored my "corporation" (the Catholic Church).

I was not on the side of the communists, the demo-Christians, or the government. I was interested in teaching my students to express themselves well (Milani, 1997, p. 269). While teaching, I did not look at my students' political parties or their faith. I used to say that each one could keep their own convictions and at San Donato I took away the crucifixes off the walls so as not to have any symbol that could keep students away from school. This gesture was controversial in the parish, but we have to remember that this parish was in a community of workers connected with left wing parties and unions.

I resisted the Florence Curia's orientation urging parishioners to vote for Christian Democracy (DC in Italian), the right-wing party. In the 1951 election, I recommended they vote for DC, but not vote for the secular parties with which DC was allied. In 1953, I made a clear distinction between Catholics and non-Catholics and said that I could not ask the latter to vote for DC candidates. I recommended that the Catholic ones choose candidates who could better defend the interests of the poor. Because of all this, I was called in to explain myself before the Curia. They accused me of playing the left-wing's game and in 1954 they sent me to the Barbiana mountains.

Another cause that I defended that put me at odds with the Church and the Italian legal system, was conscientious objection. I defended objection to military exercises, and also praised the nobility of refusing to shoot and disobeying infamous orders such as retaliation on a passive village.

My public position on this issue was a response to the Tuscan military chaplain who declared that he considered conscientious objection to be an insult to the homeland and an expression of cowardice (Fallaci, 1974, p. 377). I wrote an open letter published in a left-wing paper. I sent copies to other priests, regardless of military affiliation. I said in the letter that I did not like the divisions that were made regarding the concept of homeland. I also said that if they had the right to divide the world into Italians and foreigners, that therefore I did not have a homeland. I claimed my right to divide the world into the disowned and oppressed on one side and the privileged and oppressor on the other (Galleotti, 2008, p. 25).

I then had to defend myself for writing a letter to judges that recounted my adolescence experience of being told in school about the glories of the Empire as our homeland, and initially believing in them. This was during the fascist days in Italy. Our teachers forgot to tell us that the Ethiopians were better than us; that we went there to burn their huts with women and children inside, even though they had done nothing against us.

That evil school, whether consciously or unconsciously, was preparing us for the horrors of the second world war. It was preparing millions of obedient soldiers to be obedient to Mussolini or, more precisely, to Hitler. Fifty million dead. As a teacher, I felt the moral and civil obligation of demystifying everything, including blind military obedience. I also told the judges to indict the teachers who were still lying, the ones who had neither studied nor thought critical since those infamous times, but not to indict me (Galleotti, 2008, p. 47).

And why did I do all this? You, dear professor, may be asking yourself why I threw myself in this battle. It's because, like you, I care.

Many greetings,

Lorenzo

The first exchange of letters between Milani and Freire showcases the disparity in their background, having grown up in different socio-economic classes and cultural contexts, with religion as only common denominator (around the 20 years old for Milani), while the second set of letters highlights how close the two men were in their ideals. It also demonstrates the different paths that both educators took to the same field: the critical pedagogy and the fight for education and culture for all.

Freire once said that “no one knows it all; no one is ignorant of everything” (Freire, 2005, p.72) while Milani said that “each population has its own culture and no population has less of another” (Lancisi, 2013, p. 174). These sentences like so many others about their ideals could be attributed to either man since they opted, as the initial point of their pedagogical practices, to always listen to the ones considered ignorant and

incapable of learning by society and the school system.

Considering the theoretical framework that draws on Gee's definition of critical literacy as the mastery of discourses and uses of languages, I reflected on both authors' writing styles, word choices, ironic tone, and use of grammatical structures all the elements intrinsic to the Freire's and Milani's writing.

Their perspectives are part of a critical literacy used by many other scholars who are suggesting theories to improve schools. Freire had the chance to take part in this larger discussion and exchange of ideas. Milani did not, partly because of his lack of interest in the privileged world, and partly due to lack of time and contacts outside Italy. The letters in this project, thus represent a way of combining and even colliding, their radical critical literacy practices and theories.

To define critical literacy, I start with Freire's concepts that knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restlessness and continuing inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other (2000, p. 72). Freire contrasts the idea of student engaging in dialogue with the idea of banking, in which students are only storing content deposited by their teachers. Freire argued that if individuals cannot inquire and actively engage with what they learn, they cannot be truly human.

In Milani's point of view, I understand that the concept of critical literacy in formal and informal education settings addresses that educators need to have clear ideas about social and political problems. In this sense, Milani promoted a dialogical approach in his school, in oral and written tasks. By endorsing the motto "I care" at school, the

students at Barbiana would accept their role as learners and teachers, in which learning is not an individualistic action, but a practice that will serve both the individual and the collective.

In my reflections about critical literacy, I also borrow Giroux's (1992) notion that the awareness of eroding rather than accommodating dominant disciplinary structures and discourses offers knowledge, skills, and values. Students need to negotiate and transform the world in which they find themselves by thinking critically about their conditions, and about the politics that surround them.

In writing the letters and following the steps of the two educators, I retraced the clues from their lives that contributed to their theories of critical pedagogical practices, almost like the Catholic life ritual to which they also belonged. Child life experiences, proximity to the poor of their regions, books that disseminate their deep reflections, exile: these experiences informed their commitment to a radical reconstruction of formal education.

For example, in *Pastoral Experiences*, Milani presents the results of what we could call a detailed ethnographic survey. His goal was to better understand the reality of the working and rural classes that he was serving in his sacerdotal function. He also wanted to fill a gap in the literature for priests-in-training, which lacked any orientation as to what clerical fieldwork really was like. The linguistic register is higher than the one used in *Letter for a Teacher*, but it already shows Milani's clear and direct writing style.

The book is rich in graphics, statistics, and drawings; that is, many kinds of representations that describe the population and the work that the Church and government

needed to do in order to help improve the many lives of the working class and in rural areas. Milani also states in this book that everything he knows he owes to the workers and peasants whom he taught at the evening school (Milani 1996, 76).

Nevertheless, Milani expected that his students would learn how to speak and write well and would spend hours or an entire lesson explaining the origin and meaning of one word. In both schools (Calenzano and Barbiana) he engaged his students in practices similar to ethnographic research, where the students could be subjects and protagonists in the process of research and writing, and in which they would merge research and experiential knowledge and combine content with analysis.

The writing became a conscious activity for the community, with the objective of helping the group transform the conditions that facilitate material and cultural domination. The writing, though, had to be simple and avoid embellishment, such as excessive use of adjectives “that tends to colonize rather than emancipate the reader” (Borg et al., 2013, p. 5).

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire presented a very similar idea about the use of the words, although not in the context of writing texts, but in the context that men and women understood the value of words as they left the illiterate life behind. Freire discusses the experience of peasants first discovering themselves from their names as Pedro, as Antonio, or as Josefa, and how soon the words "world," "men," "culture," "tree," "work," and "animal" took on their true significance again.

According to Freire, the peasants could, from that moment, recognize themselves as people, therefore transforming their reality through their creative work. This idea, until

then, had seemed to be a mysterious entity. The peasants understand that they are not objects or things possessed by other people and “they can move from consciousness of themselves as oppressed individuals to the consciousness of an oppressed class” (1998, p. 155). This passage from Freire’s most known book illustrates how, through the relatively simple practices of a literacy method, Freire could help to change many lives.

On the other hand, many critics noted that Freire himself used a very high register in his book, despite his attempt to not succumb to it, for he believed that exclusionary language practices form and inform different social positions in the text (Botelho & Rudman, 2009). Botelho in the book *Dear Paulo: Letters from Those Who Dare Teach* (Nieto, 2008), for example, stated in her first letter to Freire that the language register in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1989) is not accessible to common and marginalized people. Other scholars in the United States, according to Freire himself, made similar comments, calling the book's language far-fetched and elitist. In *Pedagogy of Hope* (1994), a book that re-visits *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1989), Freire justified the choice of a higher language register saying that students and teachers should read a book knowing that it is necessary to consult resources such as dictionaries and encyclopedias without expecting to magically find the meaning.

Freire did not, though, mention anything about how an adult reader, like his students from the Literacy Program in Angicos who were still undergoing the first steps of literacy, would be able to read this higher register. Freire certainly had the intention of reaching a bigger audience than Milani in terms of book publications. Freire had a worldwide readership, while Milani was focused on changing things in Italy.

Freire's and Milani's Ways of Being Educators

As the excerpts below show, Freire presents the democratic education in a very similar way to how Milani talks about his teaching ideas, albeit with different language. Neither man ever accepted the label of his work as a system or a method of education. They talked more about forms of being an educator than forms of creating/developing a school. The goal should always be to help students become individuals to defeat the system and overcome social issues. Freire presents his arguments against the teacher who simply deposits information (his “banking” approach) and Milani presents his arguments against the learning “how to teach” (as mentioned in the second sets of letters).

Freire and Milani have insisted many times that they did not invent literacy methods. In an interview with the Brazilian newspaper *Jornal Pasquim* (1978), Freire said that he had doubts about calling his work with adult literacy a method. He said the mistake is to call it a pedagogical method, or ideology, when for him it is a method of knowledge. way was epistemological. Some people understood it. For example, there is a thesis in Canada and another one in Holland with practically the same subject: the act of knowing in Freire. This is the approach that I consider the correct one, not a preoccupation to explain the method as “ba-be-bi-bo-bu.” If people read the texts that I have been working with, especially the last one, they will understand that what I am doing is best called a theory of knowledge. (Ceccon, 1978, p. 9)

Freire requested that people concentrate on knowledge production and not the technical methods of teaching reading and writing. Milani answered the same way when he commented on literacy teaching practices. For him, “how he was doing school” was

the wrong question. He believed that people should worry about how the educators have “to be” in order to have clear ideas regarding social problems. Both educators were exploring, and not so much establishing or constructing a method; they were engaged in bringing children and adults into awareness, so they could be part of the Discourse (Gee’s capitalized D). They were teaching marginalized community members to honor and enlist their own primary discursive practices to learn the secondary discourse used by dominant classes. Milani and Freire’s main objective was to give their students access to other social dimensions of discourse, without ignoring or refusing the possibility of having a dialectical relationship with their primary discourse.

Gee (1989) and Foucault’s (1986) theories, centered on discourse and power, offer tools to understand why and how Freire and Milani’s works encouraged people to be aware of the power of words to re/create the world. Both educators were consistent and audacious in using their own scholarship and their privilege in defense of marginalized communities.

However, their binary view of power, that is, oppressor and oppressed or dominated and dominant, is questionable from the point of view of Foucault’s analysis of power. He maintains that power is exercised, not owned, and that discourse does not have one sense or one truth, but instead histories. We exercise power in the interest of the power structure, sometimes interrupting it and sometimes colluding with it (Botelho & Rudman, 2009).

Teaching as a Political Act

The intellectual influences of Freire and Milani’s lives and the repercussions in

their teaching, writing, and production of knowledge reflects the struggle between power and knowledge (Foucault, 1995) and also plays an important role in their personal lives and their critical view of education.

Power relationships are analyzed, demonstrated, and exposed in practically all of Freire and Milani's work. They established the basis of their work in relationships that come from the micro-context of power-knowledge to a macro-context that could go beyond the limits of any school setting and disrupt governments, churches, corporations, and other institutions.

The power-knowledge nexus fueled Freire and Milani's formation as activist-educators. However, their unidirectional view of these relationships contradicts how discourse works. Power as a continuum that is multiple, and contradictory acknowledges how language use offers subject positions based on complex power relations. For example, an individual can resist race-power relations and then sabotage their intent with the next word they utter (Botelho & Rudman, 2009). Power relations are not static and yet this is not reflected in the binary notions of power that informed Milani and Freire's scholarship.

Of the readings that influenced their ideas and inspired their actions, the holy gospel is the first to consider, but it is closely followed by the work of Antonio Gramsci and Karl Marx, which, as Freire would always defend, is not a contradiction. Milani did not consider himself a Marxist or a left-wing priest, despite many accusations of being *un prete rosso*, a red priest. He was not affiliated with any party.

Journalist Carlo Falconi wrote in April 1965 in the magazine *Espresso* that Milani

was a communist, “even if in his own way, which means without affiliation and with his religious faith. (...) His social dogma is simple: in the world we have only poor and rich, oppressor and oppressed” (Fallaci, 1974, p. 457). Milani would always react to the accusations of being a communist or about influencing his parishes to vote for left-wing parties or in a particular way. That said, with regard to his lack of party affiliations, he would also say that he could not tolerate people who declared themselves to be politically neutral.

Freire, on the other hand, always declared his sympathy for Marx and Engels’ ideas and joined the Brazilian Labor Party, even serving as education secretary in São Paulo, when he returned to Brazil after 15 years in exile. Among many influences cited by Freire in his books, I want to highlight Karl Marx, Antonio Gramsci, and John Dewey, although there many others who were highly considered and often mentioned by the Brazilian educator in his various books. As for Milani, the influences are less clear. He always denied being a Marxist, despite his outspoken opinions against bourgeois schools and lifestyles and their role in social reproduction, informing his class consciousness and keeping distance from his past privileged position. What is known is that Milani was an avid reader of French sociologists and philosophers.

Mayo (2013) believes that because Milani was exposed to the critique of bourgeois culture and power that occurred in France, he was probably also influenced by Bourdieu due to the merging of ideas in the book *Letter to a Teacher* and the ideas concerning the school and the middle-class cultural capital expressed by Bourdieu. Milani also sometimes referred to Mahatma Gandhi and Simone Weil (the latter was also

mentioned by Freire in his book *Pedagogy of Hope*).

Eduardo Martinelli contends that there was not anything neutral in the priest's political ideals, stating that Milani would say: "It is better to be a fascist than indifferent,". And in class, he would use the expression "let's make a concept extreme to understand it better" (Borg & Mayo, 2013, p. 121).

Milani showed admiration for Gramsci and Gandhi. According to Martinelli, Jesus, Gramsci, and Gandhi were often cited in class and Milani considered Gandhi and Gramsci to be secular saints. The required readings were *Letter to a Hiroshima Pilot*, *The Scourge of the Swastika: A History of Nazi War Crimes During World War II*, *Letters to the condemned to death during the Italian Resistance Period*, and *Prison Notebooks* by Gramsci. Mayo (2013) states that Milani, even without meaning to, anticipated or echoed neo-Marxist orientations from a number of French, English, and American sociologists.

With regard to Freire's ideas, the Marxist influence is clear and declared. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* alone Marx is cited about 25 times. Marx and Engels, the protagonists of the political, economic, and social philosophy known as Marxism, were particularly influenced by Hegel's dialectical concept of becoming and viewing the history's continuous struggle between social and economic classes. These are the basic ideas for analyzing opposite forces in reality such as oppressor and oppressed, dominator and dominated. These ideas combined with existentialism, humanism, and Christian faith, among others, influenced Freire's thinking (Kyrilo, 2011, p. 130-131). He also understood poverty and hunger from his own life experiences, personally and from

teaching in remote areas in his state of Pernambuco.

In his eleventh letter to his niece Cristina and in more than one interview, Freire (2002) mentioned that he reached the poor parts of Recife because he had been moved by his friendship with Christ, and that upon his arrival he was directed toward Marx.

Although there are no direct citations of Marx by Milani like there are with Freire's writing, the Gramsci (1893-1937) was clearly among his philosophical influences. In turn, some of the main influencers on Gramsci's reflections, actions, and writings were Marx and Engels. For Gramsci, class consciousness was the first step for liberation of oppressed and dominated people (Mesquita, Rossette, & Pachol, 2006).

According to Gramsci (1975), school institutions, and not only schools provided by the State, but the ones after work hours, in communities, could utilize the maieutic method (Socrates) in order to work for moral and intellectual reconstruction (p. 520). It may be from Gramsci that Freire borrows the idea of cultural circles as spaces to discuss political and social issues and that Milani declares that schools are accountable to Socrates and not to the *sacro cuore* (sacred heart) because schools must be open to inquiry and unrest (Assenza, 2006; Gesualdi, & Toral, 2005).

In Gramsci version, the *circoli di cultura* (culture circles) that has the function of after-school institutions that would replace the school dominated by state and church. Borg and Mayo (2006) argue that Milani and Gramsci had a similar position regarding the austerity on the notion that success at school depends on material and cultural resources. Thus, only an extended school schedule, with critical analysis and linguistic competence would be able to be compared to the education system that rewards only the

privileged.

In terms of education methods, one can say that Freire was very related to John Dewey's techniques, especially regarding the importance of the praxis. Freire probably first learned about the American educator through Anísio Teixeira, an educator to whom Freire had great admiration. What Freire takes from Dewey is the relational theory and practice and the concept of learning by doing cooperative work (Gadotti, 1994, p.118).

Freire and Milani cite French philosopher Simone Weil (1909-1943). Freire (1967), in *Education as Liberation Practice*, writes against the welfarism that takes away the responsibility that we have one to each other. He cites Simone Weil who says that the individuals have to pay great attention to the decisions that solve big or small problems that affect their own or other people interests, (1967, p. 54). In my view, Freire's idea of *dodicência*, term coined by him about the teaching and learning at the same time in both directions (student-teacher) is influence of Weil's of an University for the People with a form of exchange of wisdom reciprocally where there is not a series of conferences anymore, but an initiative of mutual instruction anchored in concrete experiences (Chambat, 2015, p. 121).

Milani's mother, Alice Weiss introduced Weil's writing to Milani, probably due the fact that, like him, Simone Weil had also Jewish origins and converted to Christianity. Weil was from an agnostic middle-class family, became a professor, but preferred to work in factories and wrote about working class issues as the causes of oppression (Chenavier, 2009).

In a letter to his mother, Milani says that he is very interested in Weil's writings

and mentions not being surprised by her resistance to be baptized since her association with the Church was for intellectual, cultural interests, and not about ritual facts (Milani Comparetti, 1977). Milani writes about Weil in at least three different texts.

In a letter to comfort a friend, Don Ezio Palombo, who was dismissed of his function as a prior (the superior priest in a parish), Milani cites Weil's response to being dismissed from her position as a philosopher professor at the university. She says that she always considered the revocation would be the crowning element of her career (Gesualdi, 1970, p. 39). In the final citation in a letter to another friend, Milani mentions liking Weil's book *Gravity and Grace*. According to Milani, it is a dangerous book that he was sure Weil also had hated because it has horrible blasphemies by also embraces God ardently.

Milani also mentions that her life is lovely and close to his own because of their journey from error to horror towards the distant light, meaning the conversion to Christianity (Fallaci, 1974, p. 594). Like Weils, Milani was also aware of Union and labor issues. He many times invited Union representatives, used to visit work places (like carpenter shops in town as related by Banchi, carpenter of Barbiana) and used to bring Union agreements as reading material to be discussed with the students. The intention in both cases were not create militants, but as Weil stated it was to give access to the true word in the labor world and to reflection about sharing and exchange.

Like Milani and Freire, she reacts to the idea of a school for a common culture, that is for all, but it is not really for anyone, and that benefits only privileged ones. A similar idea is stated in the *Letter to a Teacher* which is that the school cannot be like a

hospital that cures the health and rejects who needs help (Scuola di Barbiana, 1996). She defended a school that “translates” the different knowledges and that connects with the culture, experience and identity of the students (Chambat, 2015, p. 116). In other words, Weils, Milani and Freire share the idea of not saving some individuals but instead creating conditions for a collective emancipation respecting different backgrounds and cultures.

The features in Freire’s and Milani’s writings that demonstrate commitment to critical literacy ideology applied to the process of learning and teaching are innumerable. The points explored in these dialogues are their identities and formation as educators; their radical pedagogy that values the importance of the word in the world; and, their political views towards education.

Gee’s theories on literacy (1989) help me to understand Freire’s and Milani’s school methods because it is possible analyze that their pedagogies drew on students’ primary discourses. It means that the primary discourses are based on their cultures and traditions, as bridges to secondary discursive practices. Literacy is, thus the control of the secondary discourse and the meaning of control here is related with being able to use and ever master the language through acquisition.

In spite of many attempts to silence both educators and undermining their praxis, both men kept talking, writing, and inspiring their learners of doing the same and making choices and participating in the world. And it is still the philosophy to forge the praxis at school: help to make free human-beings able to understand the world, defender themselves, think, and participate.

The theoretical framing of Foucault's notion of power/knowledge, Gee's theory of big D and little d discourses and Janks's politics (big P and small p) offered tools to make sense of these scholars' lives and work. The poor/privileged lives moved both educators to look for solutions, first to cure their own wounds and then to share what they saw and what they learned in their interactions with others.

In my view, Milani wrote less in the first person in statements and in his letters because of his past as a privileged person, who belonged to bourgeoisie Florentine, but he clearly understood the differences and inequalities in the school system and in life. His was touched by this awareness. The metaphors related to his past are exposed in *Letter to a Teacher* where the character Pierino, who some say that could be also his nephew Andrea the son of a doctor and well loved at school, is in contrast with the characters Sandro and Gianni, who struggle to be accepted by the school system due their poor background and their different learning necessities.

Freire, on the other hand, talks about his experience of poverty and his passage to a middle-class life mainly helped by the good education received. Their background is also the beginning of the process of becoming "organic intellectuals" as Gramsci defines the people who connect with a particular class by a structural and fundamental, but not an unintentional relationship.

Milani did not claim ever a position as intellectual. Freire seemed more comfortable in accepting this position. Nevertheless, both were aware of the importance of their words as tools to offer political and social change in other people's lives. In the

process of becoming organic intellectuals, there was a kind of vocational call to the education field that happens for both educators and a strong and radical bent that led them to disrupt the status quo.

One more key element for both was the exile that could not silence them. Being dislocated gave them the stimulus to reflect and theorize even more on critical literacy and radical pedagogy, with the support of other scholars' ideas and concepts. Freire and Milani insisted in not having a methodology that could be copied exactly in the same way in other sites, but they could not avoid the exercise of theorizing their principles. This includes first and foremost the importance of advocating loudly and clearly that if one does not read and write critically, one will always be in the shade of the others (Freire, 1967, p.111), as one of Freire's students once said. In the words of one of Milani's student's "it is better to study because school will be always better than cleaning the cows' manure" (*Scuola di Barbiana*, 1996, p. 13).

Milani and Freire maintained that the oppressed needed to understand the connection between language and power; it was urgent. The message emphasized in these letters is that the dominant discourse should be faced with the power of the words from the learners' communities. They argued that knowing how to communicate and to write were key for communities to empower themselves.

The concepts of knowledge and power are put side by side here to inspire further discussions on critical literacy and radical pedagogy engaging communities to dialogue, share experiences and awareness of social and political issues that matter to all, not just to a privileged portion of our society.

Another point to be discussed here regards to the accusations of misogyny that both men had during and after their lives, it's important to note that both educators, despite having gifted minds who opened them to many opinions, were also complex human beings and not saints to be adored as Milani would always to remember in life. They were criticized and called upon to rethink about their identities and social roles in the world and language use.

Their identity and social role as white men must be considered in the process of their formation as educators and visionaries. Both Freire and Milani were criticized, probably also because their work was prominent during the 1960s, the decade of great women's rights protests and of a growing feminist awareness.

In *Pedagogy of Hope*, Freire revisits *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, and among other reflections, he presents a *mea culpa* on issues criticized by American feminists who noted the sexist mark he left in his famous book. "My debt with countless North American women from various parts of the United States, who wrote to me (...) they said I used sexist. and therefore discriminatory, language in which women have no place" (Freire, 1996, pp. 66-67). The discriminatory language at issue was the use of "men" to represent men and women. He first reacted, but later recognized that it was not a grammatical problem, but an ideological one and so in the 1970s, he started to refer "women and men" or "human beings" in his writings.

Another declaration about Freire's sexist language came from the scholar bell hooks. She was aware of his sexist language but also noted the way Freire constructs, in her opinion, "a phallogentric paradigm of liberation", which relates with a source of

torment for the fact the freedom and the experience of patriarchal manhood are linked as one, representing a blind spot in the vision of men who have profound vision of the world and the society issues. However, she did not want his blind spot to prevent us from learning from his insights.

“Freire’s sexism is indicated by the language in his early works, notwithstanding that there is so much that remains liberating. There is no need to apologize for the sexism” (hooks, 1994, p. 49). hooks words seem to urge the feminists who criticized Freire for his excessive use of word in the masculine to reconsider their complaints given the Brazilian educator’s emancipatory words and ideas.

Two left-wing Catholic women, Adriana Zarri and Lidia Menapace, started the polemic accusation of Milani’s misogyny. In part, one can say that Milani was very careful regarding the places where he would be talking with women or avoided having any of these students too close to him, but nothing more that would sustain the accusation of misogyny.

The debate started with the fact that in the school of San Donato di Calenzano women were not allowed to attend classes, but this was not Milani’s decision. Il prior Daniele Pungi was the one who decided it. Milani was a chaplain at the time and could not contest the prior’s verdict. Although, he was able to get permission to accepted girls in the theater productions that he helped create with the young people of his parish.

In Barbiana, Milani was the Prior and, although, the peasant mentality at the time allowed that girls could have less schooling than boys, he was able to convince some parents to send their daughters to school. Adriana Zarri e Lidia Menapace accused Milani

publicly of misogyny more than once. One of the accusations was that the Barbiana book is called *Letter to a 'Female' Teacher* (the feminine word is *professoressa* in Italian). Maenapace declared the book clearly misogynist, that there were not girls in the school of Barbiana, and that the word *professoressa* was not intentionally exposed for a public criticism (Perri, 2009, p. 15).

Nevertheless, the book *Letter to a Teacher* reveals the mentality of the time regarding to women. On the other the book also makes a criticism to the system school that, according to the School of Barbiana authors, privileges girls more than boys, giving preferential treatment to them. The *Letter* book had, anyway, two girls, Carla and Olga, among the eight authors, plus the assistance of the teacher Adele Corradi, as remembered by one of them, Edoardo Martinelli.

It says: “None of the girls from town ever came to Barbiana. Perhaps because the road was so dangerous. Perhaps because of their parents' mentality. They believed that a woman can live her life with the brains of a hen. Males don't ask woman to be intelligent. This, too, is racialism. But on this matter, we cannot blame you, the teachers. You put a higher value on your girl students than their parents do” (Translation Rossi & Colle, 1969, p. 16). Adele Corradi, the female teacher who collaborated at the School of Barbiana, confirmed that they had few girls, only the ones who lived nearby. Going to Barbiana from other villages was hard because they had to cross the woods, sometimes walking at night.

On the topic of machismo, during an interview, Corradi defended the priest and said that he was actually a feminist, in her opinion. She spoke of a time she invited two of

her female students from the public school to come to Barbiana to talk about the problem of the women being treated as inferior in the dancing ballrooms in the sixties. It was a non-moralist discussion about ballrooms and Milani made the following comment to all girls present: “I know you girls like to have the boys in your arms (while dancing) but remember to stay alert because if you are committed in a relationship very early you can risk staying without culture, and without being part of the political life” (Foffi, 2012).

Corradi also remembered that Milani was always eager to send his students to study abroad, including the girls. She remembers how hard it was to convince the families to let the daughters go abroad, because they were mountaineer people. So Milani would take all the precautions and a great responsibility to send the boys to England hitch-hiking, but he would send the girls by airplane. Taking into consideration the context (the countryside) and the time when Milani was living, these attempts were his way of urging women to think about the importance of emancipation without focusing only on a marriage, without a career, without seeing the world.

Regarding to multimedia literacy, both educators had some visionary contributions. Since Milani was pre-Internet and social-media era, and Freire saw the beginning of digital technological tools and their affordances and limits, I decided to consider the theme technology here. I also consider the studying abroad program that was a practice at Scuola of Barbiana, with Milani encouraging his students to visit parts of world while learning a new language.

When talking about the latter Freirian activities, Gaddotti (1994) highlights Freire’s considerations of mass media. He did not regard these means of communication

as inherently bad or good, but as something that could not be read or viewed without considering power dynamics. Freire said once in an interview with Sérgio Guimarães (1982) that he was a man of radio and TV. He watched Brazilian soap operas. He claimed that he is someone “who learns by criticizing them (p. 78). He was not against computers, but, as a man of vision, in the early nineties he said the problem here is knowing who and what will be served when information plays a large part in education.

In his adult literacy classes, Freire was already interested in the good use of multimedia tools, importing slide projectors from Poland. Around the time he was sent to prison by the Brazilian military, a shipment of projectors arrived, and the soldiers broke open the boxes, believing that Freire and others had imported arms from abroad (Kirylo, 2011, p. 54). In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1989) defends the importance of using appropriate media in class and also the value of teaching media literacy as a form of resistance against manipulation and oppression. Freire's view on technology in the context of contemporary politics of mass and alternative media merits a further re-examination (Kahn, 2010, p. 88).

Milani also had a central part of his teaching style attuned with media literacy. In the school of Barbiana, Milani and his students would read newspapers daily. They had a subscription of the newspaper *Il Giorno* and many times they would respond critically to some articles. Reading and writing letters was also among the most important activities in the group. Milani would read practically all his correspondence in presence of his students. Martinelli also states in his book that the students learned languages listening to the music of, for example, Bob Dylan and Brassens, and to radio broadcasts, in addition

to receiving foreign guests who would spend some time in Barbiana.

Studying abroad was a very important part of the education of the students of Barbiana. They would live in France, England, Germany, Algeria, and other places starting at 13 years old. Who arrived early in the morning would see Milani preparing the materials for the day, which sometimes included the registration of radio programs in English, French, German, or Spanish. Telescope, photographic laboratory, carpentry, mechanical workplace were also important activities at Barbiana.

In 1965, the electricity finally arrived to Barbiana, and also the first Olivetti calculation machines and a movie projector brought by Martinelli's brother in law (Martinelli, 2007, p.18). The media available at the time worked as an important tool for teaching languages, but Milani's knowledge and language interests were fundamental to convince the population from the mountains the importance of getting out to see the world. Milani knew German, Italian, English, French, Spanish, Latin, Hebrew and Ancient Greek (Borg, Cardona & Caruana, 2013, p. 1). The interest in providing to the students of Barbiana worldwide view and language leaning appreciation came from Milani's own background.

The similarities between Freire's and Milani's works and beliefs and the contemporaneity of their ideas are a powerful tool for helping oppressed populations in any country developed, undeveloped, rich or poor. These educators theorized above all how important it is to learn to read and write critically, and to have a better use of language in order to follow the fast changes in our knowledge-based society. The knowledge that they were concerned about was not only related to the practice of

learning, but also to teaching a curriculum that respects and honors the background and particular stories of each group of students.

One questionable aspect of Freire's and Milani's viewpoint is a tendency to see concepts of power in a binary way, which may limit an understanding of the complexities of power within all classes. Framing this paper in Gee's concept of discourse and Foucault's notion of power helped me to understand the possibilities for exercising and analyzing the importance of critical literacy and radical pedagogy in constructing and reconstructing identities.

With an awareness of the dynamics of power, people can better acknowledge privileges and generate social justice, political and social changes, and confront the idea that the oppressor's discourse is the only one. In terms of privilege, we can also think about how many times Milani and Freire used their status, their identity as men with access to the "big D" discourse to provide greater resources to their students. Milani, for example, often received material and financial aid from his middle-class family and friends in order to support improving his students' knowledge and understanding.

Freire and Milani had interesting lives that showed how the most adverse situations can become opportunities. They did it both in the school environments where they worked and in their own lives. I am talking here about the fact that they knew how to take advantage of the attempt to silence them, and did their work in exile, a great way of contributing to education. However, bell hooks (1994) cautions us to avoid the voyeuristic points of view through which students and teachers tend to see Freire. That could also be applied to Milani. The focus should be on the ideas they speak about and

the oppressed groups they talk about. hooks may be right to a certain point, but with this work I tried to show that without knowing about their experiences and life trajectories, their principles and teachings would be much less meaningful. Understanding their social role and identities also can bring people closer or push them away from their thoughts on critical literacy.

In sum, my aim in this work was to provide a basis for examining topical emphasis and omissions in both authors' texts. The analytical exercise in this project was also an initial stage for further research on the philosophy of both educators in contemporary schools. My fieldwork and data collection helped me to learn about some work that has been done in terms of social justice teaching from the direct influence of Freire or Milani. Therefore, my research created a space to understand how the socially engaged pedagogy of Freire and Milani can inform school and communities despite some of the political intolerances in the past and now to their ideas and work.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Il cuore di un essere umano è qualcosa che i libri non sanno leggere né catalogare.

A human being's heart is something that books can neither read nor catalogue.

-Milani (1952)

In this chapter, I present my definition of ethnography and an interpretation and more specific explanation of case studies. It is important to note that observations through participation in classes, attendance in and organization of debates, and interviews were the most used techniques for data collection in this project.

Interviews, a powerful methodological tool and resource, were given greater weight in the analysis in this project. Using Gee's discourse analysis theories, I gained insights into topic not available in pre-existing materials such as books, registers, photos, films, memories, and letters (Onwuegbuzie, Leech & Collins, 2012) that proved necessary to make connections between the Freire and Milani legacies. The supplementary information from interviews and conversations about Freire and Milani's ideas, manners, and practices provided legitimation and updated representations of their work.

The methodology that informs this study comes from the skills I acquired as a critical multicultural ethnographer throughout my doctoral program, and from my former work as a reporter at a daily paper in Rio de Janeiro. Combining my skills from two different, but very similar areas, gave me the tools and the confidence to bring together

data collection from a great variety of sources, blending perspectives from different realities, places, languages, and cultures with the goal of engaging in a process of consciousness-raising, literacy empowerment, and global perception.

Therefore, among the 40 or so interviews for this study, I gathered the thoughts of 16 education practitioners (scholars, teachers, and students) from three countries: Brazil, Italy, and the United States. The participants were selected from a variety of educational settings (universities, schools, unions, professional, religious) and a myriad of interviews. Initially, they can be imagined as belonging to groups under two big metaphoric umbrella perspectives: Freire and Milani. As I progressed through this study, I came to see that these two umbrellas were, in reality, covered by one larger umbrella of consciousness and critical literacy.

The multiple methodologies I employed helped me break the barriers of time and space. Ethnographically speaking, my own presence influenced and contributed to this transcultural and transnational aspect and provided an exchange with people from different generations, settings, language-backgrounds (English, Italian, and Portuguese), and language registers or Discourse/discourse (Gee, 2009). Developing a perspective via ethnographic methods comes, in part, from the multicultural interactions and cross-pollinated views observed in the field work.

Methodological Approaches

Ethnography case study mainly inform this study's design. Case study methodology is the study of phenomena, people, places, or events selected for particular reasons. Case study research is not defined as a specific use of methods (Stake, 1995;

Merriam, 2008; Barlett & Vavrus, 2017). Combined with ethnography, it may inform the process of inquiry, the culture of the place studied, data collection, the process of observation, participation and analysis, and the subjects, such as the researcher and the population included in the study.

Case study is not simply a method of studying specific individuals, historical events, and teaching strategies. Instead, case study requires an intensive description and analysis of a constrained phenomenon as described by Merriam (p. xiii, 1998). It can be either a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit. Baxter and Jack add that case studies allow researchers to observe, recognize, understand, and describe these phenomena in context through many data sources (p. 545, 2008). The many data sources used in this research are literature, documentation, interviews, artifacts, and direct and participant observations.

Ethnography

Ethnography is a qualitative methodological research tool that comes from traditional anthropology but is now common in many social-science disciplines such as education. This methodology focuses on documenting, analyzing, and understanding dynamics, structures, and relationships in one or more chosen groups and contexts. Field notes from observations, conversations, interviews, interactions, and personal access to activities are all central to the data collection.

Ethnography is a tool that gives space for reflexivity and positionality. It also allows me to analyze my presence as researcher-participant and to take stock of how that shapes and influences the many dialogues that are part of this work based on co-

participation and intergenerational and social interaction. This design also helps to elucidate, as a researcher-participant, how I observed myself, revisiting my own identities, sharing experiences with others, and finally, writing an analysis of these experiences.

The amount of time expended in the field work is always intensive and can be done over an extended period of time or it can be compressed, as in this project. My field work was done during two intense months at two different locations with visits lasting between 6 and 8 hours a day. I also enriched the data with visits to school-related settings, such as lunches with teachers, educators' formation and research institutions, union assemblies, and workshops.

I had been to the Italian school for a two-day experience three months prior to the field work period. Pamela, the school coordinator, hosted me in her house. It was our first-time meeting after several e-mail and phone conversations. When I returned for the month, I lived in a small apartment. I also had several email and phone conversations with Nelise, the Brazilian school coordinator, before the field work period. It helped me clarify my research focus and reduced the impact of the empirical data question "what is happening here?" mentioned by Heath and Street (2008).

Working with the case studies approach requires being careful when selecting the cases to study because it allows you, when comparing cases, to predict similar or contrasting results. Comparative studies approach shares many features with case studies approach (Yin, 2003, p. 46). By itself, the comparative studies approach is another heuristic technique because of its own problems solving process but with the added

dimension of contrasting.

A group of scholars (Marcus 1995; Heath & Street 2008; van der Veer 2016; Barlett & Vavrus, 2017) consider comparative case study a necessary approach to create conceptual shifts in the social sciences regarding culture, context, space, place, and comparison itself. At the same time, this approach breaks dichotomies and disrupts static conceptions (Heath & Street, 2008). It's critical to the historical and contemporary processes that form a sense of shared place, purpose, or identity in relation to the central phenomenon.

The methodological approach through study case comparison might investigate policies or processes unfolding with actors and events over time, in different locations, even transnationally (Marcus, 1995). Bartlett e Vavrus (2017) cite the example of Tarlau's (2015) research in 12 public schools in the Brazilian Landless Movement (MST). Her data collection (interviews, observation and participation) suggests the emergence of a critical "pedagogy of the land" (p.1). A comparative case study can also be historical and not solely geographically located. Therefore, contexts considered unrelated at first can instead, be found to relate across place, space, and time.

Benefits of These Methodologies

My objective was to provide, through ethnography, an interpretive analysis of the participants in two social groups influenced by either Freire or Milani. I knew I did not have enough resources and time to stay in each place for more than a month. Consequently, I did my best to complete my data collection in a focused and objective way in the time I had.

My visits to both schools, plus the interviews in the United States, occurred between 2016 and 2018. Both schools were abroad. About six months prior to the visits, I made contact through phone and e-mail conversations I spent approximately 250 hours (in two months of whole day visits including some weekends for school events) in observations, interviews, presentations, organization of and participation in events.

Having more than one research site was also a good way to observe how humans can be part of different communities and develop multicultural practices that change dynamically, instead of being part of a single entity or cultural system. This ethnography research unites my own interest as ethnographer, mapping myself and sorting the local and global relationships found in the entrenched ideals, words, and discourses (Marcus, 1995; Ortner, 1997; Erickson, 2011). The ethnography combined with comparative case study methods provided an interesting procedural mix made it clear that the two groups I observed can be situated under one larger and common analyses of social and political events and processes.

The procedures for ethnography was the daily participation in the school life and the chance to be immersed in the community and interact with the people. Being present for extended periods of time and participating in all kind of extra-curricular events and meetings certainly enriched me as a human being, as a researcher, and greatly enhanced my data collection work.

Research Purpose and Questions Restated

The purpose of this study was to understand how the socially engaged pedagogies of Freire and Milani inform current scholarship, schools, and communities. The

imaginary dialogue among me and educators Freire and Milani was augmented by my observations and participation in activities, and in-person interviews with scholars and educators who worked with both men. The educators in this study were self-identified (and sometimes previously identified by their coordinators) as inspired by Freire or Milani. I invited them to be reflexive about their subjectivity, positioning, and criticality as educators, and to share their opinions on contemporary society.

Through the combination of methodologies, my goal was to understand to what extent education practitioners and teachers engage students and other school actors to see themselves as political historical subjects of their world (Darder, 2002, p.119), and to what extent their theories and philosophies came Freire and/or Milani. To reach this point, I needed to cast myself as another subject or phenomenon across the fieldwork that unified both educators. There are many ways of saying it, but I found critical consciousness to be the central idea in the whole picture.

Determining the unity of analysis that would be studied was an important step to take while elaborating the research question. It prepared me for searching today's representations of Freire and Milani's ideas. It could be done in a very extensive way, but I needed to narrow my choices to fewer locations and find sites where education practitioners who were open to sharing their visions, work, and words with me. The unit of analysis would not have developed without the ethnographic case studies approach, but first, I needed the questions. The emphasis of this research became finding the best ways to answer "why" and "how" (Yin, 2003), or "in which ways" questions (re-stated in the following Table 1). Therefore, I restate the questions that give focus and centrality to

this project:

1. In what ways are multiple educational contexts engaged with Paulo Freire's and Lorenzo Milani's pedagogical practices?
2. In what ways have their pedagogical practices inspired new teaching strategies and innovation?

Research Contexts and Participants

Reading and writing practices combined with long hours of conversations about Freire and Milani started before the 2016-2018 timeframe for this project. I divided the research contexts into two groups that are subdivided again. I must mention the value of the bricolage concept of research in the methodology section. The context related to the first big group is divided by many visits to and connections with scholars and institutions that work to keep Freire and Milani thoughts and ideals alive and available. The contexts related to the second big group are the schools--one in Italy and one in Brazil--where the praxis could be observed, studied, and analyzed by me.

The first contacts for this research happened in July 2012, in Florence, Italy, while talking with a group of friends about Paulo Freire. My friends Elio Iapalucci and Maria Pia Zini remarked that my descriptions of Freire reminded them of Lorenzo Milani and his work at the Barbiana School. A year later, I formally interviewed Iapalucci and Zini for a paper in my Discourse Analysis course. Zini attended some of Milani's lectures in the 1960s in Barbiana, and worked as a volunteer a decade later, typing some of Milani's letters that later were published in books.

Back in the United States, that same year, I mentioned my growing interest in

Freire's work, critical literacies, and radical pedagogies. to my Professor Anna Botta, then Chair of the Italian Department at Smith College. Before sharing my earlier conversations about Milani Professor Botta also recommended that I look for books on the Italian priest-educator. At this moment, I knew I was going in the right direction and began defining some units of analysis: Freire, Milani, oppressed people, Barbiana, critical literacies, critical consciousness.

In July 2016, I interviewed Giovanni Banchi, the carpenter of the School of Barbiana and today's president of the *Centro Formazione e Ricerca Don Lorenzo Milani e Scuola di Barbiana*. This interview led me to educator Martinelli, the former student of Barbiana, a known speaker of Milani's legacy. Martinelli frequented the school from 1964 to 1967, an experience that left an indelible mark on his entire life. He became a Union leader at the age of 18 and later continued his studies in college to become a community educator.

In my search for a scholar who had personal contact with Freire, I reached out to Professors Ira Shor and Donald Macedo. Unfortunately, Professor Macedo never responded but in 2017 Professor Shor did. We began a series conversation about Freire, my research, and the Brazilian political situation in 2017 and 2018. Parallel to my search for scholars and individuals who had personal connections with Freire and Milani, I researched school settings where I might conduct fieldwork.

This initial group of people, who helped me to theorize about my search, brought me to the practical part of this project: the two public schools, in Brazil and Italy, as I mentioned in Chapter 1. In the following sections, I will provide details of the arduous

experience of gaining site access of these two contexts.

The Long Wait to Find the Schools to Visit

The idea of combining history, philosophical ideas, my epistolary exercise (writing letters to and between Freire and Milani) and praxis sounded ideal to me, but I needed at least two schools to visit. My final decision was a school in Brazil and a school in Italy. In this paper, I change the names of the schools to protect privacy. I call the Brazilian school *Freire-inspired School* and the Italian, the *Milani-inspired School*.

Neither follows or demands strictly Freirean or Milanian methodologies or techniques in their curricula, but both employ teachers, coordinators, and chairs whose actions, decisions, and planning are influenced by both educators. The exception is the adult evening courses at the Freirean School that more closely follows Freire's methods, for example, the system of teaching adults to read and write in a relatively short period of time, in less than six months.

The names of the schools, their exact locations, and the identities of the coordinators, teachers, and students including the four 'focal student participants, are all protected by the use of pseudonyms. Participants who are public 'faces' for Freire's and Milani's work are presented here with their real names: Ira Shor and Edoardo Martinelli.

Accessing the Italian School

My first contact for the Italian fieldwork was in a school in Prato, Toscana, the same region where the Calenzano and Barbiana Schools, coordinated by Don Milani, are located. Martinelli, a former student of Milani's, provided the contact of the school. Martinelli had worked on some projects at this public school and knew they were strongly

influenced by the methods and mindset of Barbiana. In order to be accepted as a researcher, I had to complete an online request form including my professional background and the nature of my inquiry. To my surprise, the school president denied my request.

The second possibility was a high school in the north of Italy, but I wanted an elementary to middle school to match the age of the students in both Brazil and Italy. Again, I decided to search online. Before I contacted any of the schools on my new list, Giovanna Bellesia, Anna Botta, and Guido Riverdito, three Smith College professors familiar with my research interests, suggested I contact the coordinator of a school in a Region in the Northwest of Italy that was established in the 1970s based on the principles of Lorenzo Milani and the School of Barbiana.

Pamela (pseudonym), one of school coordinators and now Vice President of the school, was as welcoming as her Brazilian counterpart. I first met Pamela in March 2017 at the afore-mentioned school meetings with Martinelli. Even though it was our first encounter, she invited us to spend the night at her house instead of going to a hotel. She also provided meals, including one evening when the school staff brought Italian food for us all to share after Martinelli's lecture. She is a great connoisseur of Milani, genuinely proud of the work that they have been doing these last forty decades.

Accessing the Brazilian School

My first choice for fieldwork was the Paulo Freire Charter School in Holyoke, Massachusetts, but, at the time (the end of 2016) my professors urged me to look for another option due to administrative changes afoot at the school. I realized that my

interest was also changing because I wanted to be in a public school. Since I was already trying to contact schools in Italy, I thought, why not look in Brazil, my home country?

The initial contacts in Brazil were frustrating. After two months of contacts by phone and e-mail to schools in my own region in Brazil, the Southeast, I decided to step out of my comfort turn my search to Freire's region, in the Northeast. Upon reflection, I realized that it was a good choice since, the southeast, especially the states of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, tends to more strongly influence the general culture, e.g., the school curriculum, the books selected as texts, as I later learned during an interview with one of the teachers (more on this in the Analysis section).

I searched public schools online since I didn't have any local contacts. Luckily, the state and capital city I chose have an online network of public schools. After one unsuccessful contact, a municipal school answered my call.

Nelise (pseudonym), the Freire-inspired School coordinator and a Freirean scholar, is an outspoken woman, who was once a city councilor candidate. She was also once shot in the arm during an attempted car theft in the same neighborhood as the school. Nelise chose to be a school coordinator, and she believes many of her colleagues made the same choice, because of the school's relationship with Freire's name.

I felt accepted and welcome to her community from our first conversation. She was interested in my research and in having me there. She made it clear from the start that not everyone there was a follower of Freire but had names of some teachers she felt confident would be ideal for my project.

We planned to speak a week later so she could certify that the two school administrators would also agree to my presence in the school. In our follow-up call, she confirmed their approval and suggested I plan to include observations in some of the adult evening classes.

This program, Education for Young People and Adults (in Portuguese: *Educação para Jovens e Adultos*) or simply *EJA*, is a national program in Brazil, known for using Freire's methods as one of its main references. The current age requirement specifies that 'Young People' must be at least 15 years old and that 'Adults' must be at least 18 years old, not 18 and 21 as in past programs (see the Analysis section in Chapter 4 for more on EJA).

Social and Political Profile of Both Schools

The Milani-Inspired School

The school in the Northwest of Italy that I refer to as the "Milani-inspired School" or simply "MIS" was established in 1976 as an experimental school when it separated from another middle school. The decision to become a Milani-inspired School followed the ideologically experience of the School of Barbiana created by Don Milani in the 50s and 60s. In the 70s, a group of teachers asked the Italian Education Ministry for autonomous control of the school, then it became an experimental research institution, which means open to research new methods and transversal teaching styles (transdisciplinary courses). Experimental projects include innovative research methodology, pedagogical curriculum and structure that can be used as a model for other

Italian schools. Today MIS is not just a special needs school, but rather a very inclusive and liberal one.

My arrival in June at the Milani-inspired School was smooth. In March, I had already met most of the teachers and the students from the 5th grade classroom that I would be observing for most, but not all, of my time there. I reconnected with Pamela, the coordinator who offered free access to the whole school and was welcomed by many people who remembered me or knew that I was arriving.

I felt exactly as the descriptions I had read by visitors who asked D. Milani to allow them to observe in the Barbiana's School. I could not just sit back passively and watch; I had to interact and contribute, which I did in a complete and voluntary way. It perfectly complemented the naturalistic approach of ethnography, aligned with the purpose of creating co-participation, intercultural, intergenerational, and social interaction to understand how consciousness, critical literacy, and Milani's legacy was expressed in that environment. When Paolo directed me to the class called "Prima D" (5th grade) and re-introduced me to the students, the smiles and greetings of "Buongiorno" from these 11-year-old students could not have filled me with more joy.

During my field work period at MIS, many of the teachers expressed their liberal political thoughts more in line with the left political parties. I learned from my interviews with teachers that though the school was initially seen as a place for "challenging students," it is now regarded as a place whose more alternative approach welcomes and benefits students who do not respond well to traditional school methods.

Vita, the physical education teacher, worked at the MIS from 1978 to 2018. She subscribes to the notion of the expressive artistic laboratory of the school teacher. I observed her classes, participating in stadiums activities off-campus. In one instance, I took the bus with her and a group of almost 40 students. She paints a portrait of the beginning of the school below:

Translation:

Vita: La scuola Milani-inspired School (MIS) è nata [come distaccamento] dalla scuola C dove prima c'erano le classi "normali" e le classi differenziali perché nella nostra regolamentazione statale potevano esistere le classi differenziali dove ci stavano quelli che avevano dei problemi di apprendimento, sociali, erano magari più lenti o più agitati. Cioè quelli che erano "scartati" che venivano messi così. [...] Quindi un gruppo di insegnanti giovani che pensavano tutti nella stessa maniera, dicevano: "ma questi qua non devono stare nelle classi separate, devono stare insieme." Allora, siccome c'erano tante classi differenziali, hanno staccato questa parte e hanno creato la scuola MIS. Era nel 1976.

Simone: Quando hai scelto di venire a lavorare qui?

Silvia: Erano due-tre anni dopo ed era appena diventata sperimentale [...] ha potuto fare queste cose perché vuol dire insegnanti in più, segreteria, persone in più, allora è nata. Allora siccome gli insegnanti che c'erano erano convinti che la scuola dev'essere aperta a tutti, che tutti devono stare con tutti, che se faccio, capisco, che se

Vita: The Milani-inspired School (MIS) was born [as a detachment] from the C school where before there were the "normal" classes and the differential classes because in our state regulation it could exist the differential classes where there were those who had learning problems, social, and who were maybe slower or more agitated. That is, those that were "discarded" that were put like this. [...] So a group of young teachers thinking in the same way said: "but these children here do not have to stay in separate classes, they have to be together with all the other children." So, as there were so many differential classes, they removed this part and created the MIS school. It was in 1976.

Simone: When did you choose to come to work here?

Silvia: It was two or three years later, and the school had just become an experimental school [...] it could be in this way because it means to have more teachers, secretaries, more people. So, since the teachers who were there were convinced that the school must be open to everyone, that everyone should be with everyone, that if I do things materially, I understand better, I do not have to read them

faccio materialmente le cose capisco meglio, non li devo leggere soltanto sui libri, e tutta una certa fascia di persone di sinistra ha iscritto i figli qua. Perché pensavano allora l'utopia ci faceva credere che la scuola avrebbe livellato la società portando tutti allo stesso livello. Più restavi a scuola e più sei simile al tuo compagno, questa era la nostra idea, perché facciamo insieme le stesse esperienze che era la mentalità di Barbiana. A Barbiana i bambini venivano da uno stesso livello sociale, erano molto diversi anche all'epoca.

only on books, and a whole group of people left-wing minded registered their children here. Because the utopia made us believe that the school would level the society by bringing everyone to the same level. The more you stayed at school and the more you are similar to your partner, this was our idea, because we do together the same experiences that present in Barbiana's mentality (D. Lorenzo's school). In Barbiana, children came from the same social level, they were very different even at the time.

One section of the building still houses the middle school (from the original split) that follows the standard Italian curriculum: shorter school days, less laboratories and no transversal courses (that combines two or more disciplines). Since 2006, the MIS has been part of a national program with two other middle schools located in north and central Italy that also use alternative approaches.

During my visit, the teachers prepared a document to be presented to the Italian government in order to retain their status as an experimental school. I was invited to provide feedback during one of their meetings and to join the group that was writing the section on language classes. When, in the general elections in Italy in March 2018, the central-right wing parties won, there were some apprehension at the MIS that their status would not be renewed due to their liberal educational approach. However, the Vice President of the school told me that the document *was* approved and signed in that same month before the formation of the new government.

The Freire-Inspired School

In the Brazilian school, Freire's philosophy was adopted on a more case-by-case basis, depending on the individual teacher. In addition to the observations and interviews conducted with adults in three different classrooms (two in Brazil and one in Italy), I had informal conversations with students in grades four and five (10 and 11-year-olds) and with some adult students in Brazilian evening literacy project that groups first to fifth grades all together. These conversations helped illuminate the students' grasp on critical literacy and critical thinking.

Most of the ten teachers whom I spoke with consistently demonstrate a great and inspiring interest in social justice and a belief in the power of education to affect change. It is important to remember that this school is located in a region where the left-wing candidate received a high percentage of votes in the 2018 Brazilian presidential election. I also participated in a Union Assemblée with these same teachers. They were excited to fight for change and happy to include me in their discussions. On one of my visits to the Center and School of Formation of Educators Professor Paulo Freire, I learned that the MIS's inclusion of special needs students in their classrooms has earned them a great reputation.

The school has 655 students, 20 teachers divide among 26 classes in three sessions: morning, afternoon, and evening. The school has also 14 special-needs educators. The morning and afternoon sessions span kindergarten to fifth grade. The evening sessions span first to fifth grade and make up the program called Education for

Young People and Adults. The school is located in an urban neighborhood of a large capital city in the Northeast of Brazil with middle class inhabitants and some streets without pavement.

Compared to other public schools in Brazil, the structure of the school is adequate, except for the children's bathroom, as one of the students mentioned (see data analysis). In previous decade, the building housed a private school that was purchased by the local government, according to Nelise. She began working there in 2015. She was in her second year as the pedagogical coordinator at the school when I interviewed her, she seemed very comfortable, free to make decisions, such as accepting visits from researchers like me, and was well-loved by the other educators. Two women principals oversee the school, one for the morning session, and one for the afternoon/evening sessions. They both demonstrated great trust in Nelise's work and encouraged me to talk to her and ask for her assistance about classrooms-and school-related topics.

Interestingly, this happened in the same way in Italy During a conversation with the principal, I was encouraged to interview and ask for any kind of assistance from their pedagogical coordinators: Pamela, my initial contact, and Sandro, who helped me during my month-long stay.

In Brazil, after passing the state exam in education, the teacher has the option of choosing the public school where one wants to work, depending on the availability. Below, I include an excerpt from Nelise, talking about the Freire-inspired School and her choice to work there.

Nelise: Essa escola anteriormente era uma escola particular. Era uma escola chamada Colégio Independência. Após isso aí, há 10 anos, a prefeitura comprou esse prédio e passou a ser uma escola pública que se caracteriza como uma homenagem ao pedagogo.

Nelise: Eu escolhi vir trabalhar aqui por paixão mesmo e pela relação com Paulo Freire. Por paixão esse pedagogo maravilhoso que ele foi, que lutou tanto pela educação, né? E foi tão incompreendido pelo mundo, pelo mundo não, pelo Brasil! Pela sociedade, né? Que foram os militares (...) o homem queria era fazer as pessoas pensantes, as pessoas pensarem.

Translation:

Nelise: This school was formerly a private one. It was named Independence School. After that, ten years ago, the city hall bought the building and it became a public school that is characterized as a tribute to the pedagogue [Paulo Freire].

Nelise: I chose to come here to work for passion and because with the relation with Paulo Freire. For passion this wonderful pedagogue that he was, who fought so much for the education, right? And he was so misunderstood by the world, not by the world, by Brazil! By this society, right? That were the military (...) the man wanted to create thinkers, to make people to think.

In contrast with the Italian school, I was anxious on my first day at the Recife Public School because I hadn't previously visited. I had talked to the Brazilian coordinator Nelise many times by phone in the six months leading up to my arrival. She kindly drove me to school each day I was there. Nevertheless, I was nervous that first day precisely because I was driving to school with the coordinator! This part went well. We confirmed what we had previously agreed to: I would observe one class in the morning, and one in the afternoon. She was not a coordinator for the evening shift, but after speaking with the principal, it was arranged that I could observe classes according to whatever schedule that the three teachers in that program thought best.

The coordinator was exactly as I imagined: a lovely, caring, and talkative person. We arrived at school and she took me to the teachers' lounge (or a very small room) with

a long table. She made a general introduction to the teachers present. I wasn't yet sure to which classroom I would be directed. I asked to be placed in one of the 5th grades. The bell rang. All of us went outside. The coordinator or the principal (called the school manager in Brazil) took the microphone to start the good morning ritual. In this ritual, she welcomed all the students, mentioned that it would be a good day for all, and finally recited the Catholic version of the "Our Father" pray. All the students, parents and teachers recited the prayer with her and everything settled down. Out of the entire month I was there, I have to say that was one of the most interesting moments. In my critical mind I kept asking myself: is it indoctrination? Is it imposition? Maybe it is just a key moment used to calm the students and cue them that it was time to go to class and start their day. This ritual caught my attention because the state is non-denominational, and Freire was a Catholic man of faith.

Knowing I was most interested in observing teachers who were enthusiastic about Freirean ideas, the coordinator already had two in mind: one in the fourth-grade morning shift and another one in fifth grade afternoon shift (which in Brazil, is still taught by one teacher for all disciplines as part of fundamental education). My routine for the time that I was there became mornings with Mary and afternoons with Lea. Lunch and dinner was always with the coordinator discussing schools and Freire. Before class in the mornings and evening, and during intervals, I was in the teachers' room. This experience was ideal for interacting with other teachers who shared their appreciation for Freire and daily struggles with the Brazilian system. From these daily encounters, I was invited to observe other classroom activities, to be part of the assembly, to go to the Paulo Freire's Teachers

Formation Institute, and come to a memorable field trip day in a historical farm of Recife, organized by the Special Needs coordinator.

There were two stoppage days in my first week in Recife. I confess that I panicked fearing the stoppage could become a strike depending on the teachers' decision during the assemblies. I went to the Union Assembly in the second day of stoppage and the teachers voted against the strike. It was a very exciting experience, having the chance to participate in a very politicized, critical, and engaged type of discourse, exactly as Freire and Milani would want, encourage and expect from teachers. A group of four teachers of the Freire-inspired School were there and I stayed with them. The auditorium was filled with teachers from the municipality of Recife and the debate was heated. The discourse was, obviously very political, and, in my view, called to mind Paulo Freire's book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (see more on Analysis section).

Participant Recruitment Strategies

The process of recruiting participants for this project was much less time consuming than the process of finding the sites for my fieldwork. With the exception of three teachers in the Brazilian school and one scholar in the United States, the other 28 educators who I solicited for interviews and/or to observe, accepted. The suggestions from the coordinators in both schools helped me in selecting subjects to observe and interview. The two scholars, Shor and Martinelli, were very responsive and available for conversations on their experiences working, studying, and writing with or about Freire and Milani since it is an intense part of their life and work.

Moreover, all the educator participants were engaged in helping me and proposed

other people and places to obtain more information. The recruitment process was like surfing a gentle wave. After listening to the 28 interviews, I reviewed them again using data analysis based on coding results to find those with content most related to critical pedagogy and consciousness.

As a result, I selected a sample of 12 educators for data analysis among the two schools and other settings, plus three students. The participants were selected based on their demonstrated closeness with Freire and/or Milani's ideas in their academic work, teaching philosophy, and discourse. In the Brazilian school, Nelise, the pedagogical coordinator was instrumental to introduce me to the teachers who were more aligned with Freire's work.

I had total freedom in both schools to approach and solicit teachers and coordinators for interviews. In fact, I noticed their willingness to talk about their work in the classroom and their position in relation to the greater scheme of things. Of course, I have to pose the question regarding the role that my provenience as a student from an American institution played in this (see Chapter 4 for more discussion on this topic).

I also did not have any restrictions from the schools in talking with the students, but of course, respected the parents' wishes evidenced by their responses to the consent forms. Following the Freirean Schools teachers' suggestion, I visited the *School for Educators Formation Professor Paulo Freire* and interviewed the spokesperson. He was also responsible for authorizing my observation and interviews in the Recife school.

Among the students, the younger ones whose parents approved our meeting, were very eager to talk to me. The opposite happened in the evening class that I visited three

times and observed on two occasions. Among 10 students, only three volunteered to talk to me. They were very courteous and respectful when I talked in class. Some even asked me questions about my research and about life in the United States.

The whole process of interviews went well due the openness and willingness of the participants, especially among teachers. I interviewed more participants than the 16 that I selected for this project: I conducted a total of 40 interviews among educators and students, but in whittling the data for this project, I chose to include those I recognized as significant to Freire and Milani and contemporary critical pedagogy consciousness.

In the following section I explain the formal process of getting authorization and issuing the necessary documents to have access to the public schools and to have the permission of children's responsible in order to collect data and interview participants.

Ethical Considerations

The process of interviews and conversations was valuable in gleaning to what degree each individual had been influenced by Freire and Milani. In addition, the consent forms themselves were an interesting engagement point. This particular request involved an explanation of my project which helped establish a closer relationship with each participant, and in many of the younger students, with a member of their families.

A curious factor is that among the students in Italy, 20 out of 23 asked to be interviewed after their parents signed the consent forms. I did not meet all the parents, but I met at least half of them in an open school event day when students presented their activities in various topics: garden, geography, music, math, science, art-languages projects. The mathematics teacher asked me to prepare a brief presentation about my

dissertation research for the parents I also brought a Brazilian sweet-savory dessert named Romeo and Juliet to offer to them. I noticed, during this encounter, that the parents knew about me because they had read the consent forms.

In Brazil, the process of getting 42 consent forms signed was a much longer one. Only 15 of them signed without seeing me, but most only signed on the day that the school held the parents' meeting and individual consultations with teachers. The students were less keen to do interviews even with signed consent forms, but eventually 20 of them agreed. In the evening class, among the young and adult students, it was even more difficult. Out of 10 students, only three signed the consent form and agreed to meet with me.

The teachers from the Freire-inspired School suggested that I visit the *Escola de Formação de Educadores Professor Paulo Freire* (Professor Paulo Freire School for Educators Formation) an academic space where teachers from the municipal public school attend regular courses and workshops.

I went in my second week and was graciously received by the vice academic manager who consented to an interview and invited me to a workshop on one of the Freire's book (Pedagogy of Hope). He also let me know that I'd need to complete a document issued by them to continue my observations in their formation center and at the public school. In the Italian Milani-inspired School the authorization came from the principal, whom I had already met in the first visit two months prior to my arrival.

The Adult Education Programs

I also collected data during three visits to the evening program for adults in the

Freire-inspired School and the Italian language and culture volunteer program for immigrants at the Milani-inspired School on Thursdays after school hours.

The evening school project in Brazil is for young adults (from 15 to 18 years old) and adults (over 18 years old). The history of the current adults' education program demonstrates a slow return of Freire's adult literacy method to the Brazilian schools since 1985. After Freire was exiled from Brazil, the military dictatorship implemented the Brazilian Movement of Alphabetization (*Mobral*) in 1967, a program created without critical and problematizing characteristics (Moura, 2015; Souza, 2012). In the 80s when the military started losing administrative powers, the adult evening educational program went through a long process of change to finally revert to Freire's principles of education. Since 1985, a program called *Fundação Educar* (Education Foundation) proposed the return to Freire's ideals that valued the social and personal reality of the students.

In 1988 this program was implemented and written into the new Brazilian constitution as law. In 1996, a new law on education policy for evening courses was enacted, and the new minimum age for being considerate young adult became 15 instead of 18, as it was in the past. The current program is known as EJA acronym for Education for Young People and Adults, in Portuguese, *Educação para Jovens e Adultos*.

The articles state that the education of young people and adults is designated for those who did not have access or were not able to continue their elementary, middle, and high school educations. The classes and exams will follow a standardized national curriculum, following the American model that does not take in consideration the strengths and challenges of individual students.

The after-school program in the Milani-inspired School was initiated by the teachers and does not follow any government-specified curriculum. Five educators, some retired, teach Italian language and culture to immigrants. The classes take place in the library and one of the school classrooms. The students are all adults. I observed and volunteered during the classes. I was advised against interviewing them due to their delicate situation (most of them are undocumented and may not be comfortable filling out paperwork for consent).

Two interesting points from this context caught my attention. The first was the fact that, in receiving visitors, Milani would do exactly the same: the visitors should teach something to the students and not being there as mere observers. The second point was that the teacher made a judgement of my parents' immigration to Brazil and my immigration to the United States based on our previous informal conversations about my life and decided that my parents' history would be the one that could bring hope and example to their students who left to live in Italy for the same reasons that my parents left Italy in the 1950s to go to Brazil.

Observations, fieldnotes, artifacts and documentary materials

I have been writing analytical and integrative memos since beginning the process of data collection in 2015. The memos helped me integrate the data into a conversation of theories and research literature as I explored my research question (Horvat, 2013), as I incorporated the importance of Gee's DA question in understanding the discourses.

My observations were done in a great variety of contexts, with people of different ages and backgrounds and languages, but with the same goal of keeping what O'Sullivan

(1999) calls a transformative learning in mind. The inspiration for my data collection can be understood by the words of Conquergood (1991) “[t]he empiricist’s response of fieldwork is honesty, humility, self-reflexivity, and an acknowledgement of the interdependence and reciprocal role-playing between knower and known” (p. 182).

The excerpts from the transcribed discourses of participants are not randomly selected. It is important to acknowledge that the selection of transcription and excerpt are a theoretical and interpretative processes. They are representations related to the ideals, theoretical choices, and actions not only of the participants but also, *especially* mine, as a researcher and interviewer.

The format for the transcribed quotations is presented inside boxes and includes first the excerpt in italics in the original language that can be Portuguese or Italian and then parallelly I present the translation of the quotes into English.

The selection and analysis of a transcript is a practical and theoretical necessity that must be recognized as a system that relates to goals, for it is impossible to record and describe every single word or movement from recordings (Cook, 1990; Davidson, 2009; Duranti, 1997). In this study my priority was to be guided by Gee’s and Foucault’s analytical tools in terms to power, multiculturalism, and language relations.

The data was collected from 2015 to 2018 using audio recording, hand note taking, and through collecting materials (conference pamphlets, drawings, handout exercises, books on conferences, online materials for both schools, digital multimedia applications of Milani’s techniques). The data used for this paper includes the analysis of seventeen interviews with focal participants that lasted from 60 minutes to 90 minutes

each with a little less than 20 hours of interview data. Additional data was collected thorough interviews with more participants from the schools, and from conferences and workshops.

I also facilitated a dialogue between two of my focal participants Edoardo Martinelli and Ira Shor because of their close relations with Milani and Freire respectively, as learners, collaborators, and friends. Their dialogues and presentations are also part of the data in this project. Their presentations in the United States totaled about three hours. Martinelli' presentations and workshops totaled about 5 hours and my informational conversations with both them totaled about more 10 hours.

Their encounter in 2018 in Amherst and Northampton (Massachusetts) linked together the connection missed between Freire and Milani. Their stories offered an understanding of Freire and Milani as socially responsible human beings, complex human beings like the rest of us, rather than the myths that are often portrayed upon them.

The theoretical tool for discourse and narrative analysis was also relevant for my methodology of data collection. My previous practices on discourse analysis were instrumental in helping me pay attention to the entire narrative for this new project. The interview process was less rigid, allowing more spontaneity, since for a more qualitative style which included conversations whose meaning can be constructed through analysis (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

During the transcription, rereading, and translation processes, I was already analyzing the data and identifying codes that were related to consciousness raising, identity issues, memories, inclusion, teaching approach awareness, and power

relationships. Once coded, I compared and categorized, and selected the items with the most expressive, experiential and relational value, following Gee's discourse analyzing practices.

Data collection and analysis included transcriptions of audio material collected beginning in 2015. Once the transcriptions were complete, I used a Word document to store, code, and translate excerpts from Italian and Portuguese into English, and to re-read all the transcripts. Initially, using the software NVivo to categorize the data into groups of meaning, I generated four main themes that best represented the phenomena of interest (Starks & Trinidad, 2007) that capture how Freire and Milani ideas are being enacted and reinvented and searching for points of dialectically and dialogically connection.

In the section below, I introduce my focal participants for this study. First, I group the participants in two tables according to their Freirean or Milanian perspectives. I include some information about the participants followed by a section where I provide more detailed descriptions about each participant.

Participants

I use pseudonyms for all participants except for Shor who is a public individual known for working with Paulo Freire and for his extensive activity in keeping his legacy alive. Although the teachers and the spokesperson from the institute gave me the authorization to use their real names, I chose to use pseudonyms to respect all privacy's and specially the students'.

Table 1 has four focal teachers' participants from the Freire-inspired School -

Nelise, Lea, Mary and Zanna - and two focal student who are Marcelo and Letícia. I mention other students (always using pseudonyms) in my study but since they are not the focal ones, I did not include them here. The table also includes a member of one of the institutes that provides teacher formation and a workshop and that is inspired in Freire's philosophies by Professor Ira Shor.

Table 1: Table of Participants Affiliated with Freire's Work

Participant	Position	Formal Education	Gender
Alex (pseudonym)	Vice academic manager of one of Paulo Freire's institutes in Brazil.	Master's in history	Male
Nelise (pseudonym)	Pedagogical coordinator in two public schools – day and evening	Degree and post-graduation in Pedagogy and degree in Law	Female
Lea (pseudonym)	Teacher – 5 th grade	Degree in Pedagogy	Female
Mary (pseudonym)	Teacher – 4 th grade	Degree in Psycho-pedagogy	Female
Zanna (pseudonym)	Teacher (EJA) – Young and Adults literacy program	Degree in Pedagogy	Female
Ira Shor (real name)	Professor	Doctor in Education Professor College of Staten Island, City and disciple of Freire	Male
Marcelo (pseudonym)	Student	4 th grade – 10 years old	Male
Letícia (pseudonym)	Adult student	EJA – 60 years old	Female

Table 2 includes five teachers from the Milani-inspired School - Pamela, Felice, Vita, Alvaro and Perla -, and only the focal student Bernardo, I mention other students (always using pseudonyms) in my study but since they are not the focal ones, I did not include them here. The table also includes two members of *Centro di Formazione e*

Ricerca Don Lorenzo Milani e Scuola di Barbiana, president Nanni Banchi and educator Edoardo Martinelli.

I use pseudonyms for all participants except Banchi and Martinelli who are public individuals known for their work to keep Milani's legacy alive. Like in the Freire-inspired School, although the teachers gave me the authorization to use their real name, I chose to use pseudonyms to respect all privacy's and specially the students'.

Table 2: Table of Participants Affiliated with Milani's Work

Participant	Position	Formal Education	Gender
Pamela (pseudonym)	History and Geography teacher, school coordinator, and, since 2018, school vice president	Degree in Art, with BA in Italian and History	Female
Felice (pseudonym)	Italian teacher	Degree in Art, with BA in Literature and Languages	Female
Alvaro (pseudonym)	Art teacher	Degree in Art History	Male
Vita (pseudonym)	Physical education teacher	Degree in Physical Education	Female
Perla (pseudonym)	Former Italian-History-Geography teacher. Volunteer at the library and at after school for immigrants	Degree in Art, with BA in Italian and History	Female
Nanni Banchi	President of Centro di Formazione e Ricerca Don Lorenzo Milani e Scuola di Barbiana	Craft wood worker and wood workshops instructor at Barbiana.	Male
Edoardo Martinelli (real name)	Educator of Centro di Formazione e Ricerca Don Lorenzo Milani e Scuola di Barbiana	Degree in Community Education Ex-student of Barbiana School (Don Milani)	Male
Bernardo (pseudonym)	Student	1 th grade middle school – 11 years old	Male

Description of participants

Nelise is the Freire-inspired School coordinator, a Freirean scholar, outspoken woman, and a one-time city councilor candidate. From the first day, we talked openly. She was interested in hearing about my research and in having me there. She is a very talkative person, loved by most of the teachers in the school. She is caring with the students. She works as coordinator in both school sessions, and in the evenings, as a coordinator in another public school in the adult education project.

She is close to retirement. Her sister teaches nursing and is also a Freirean Scholar. She published a book on Education in Health settings from the Freirean cultural circles' viewpoint (2008) and teaches a course on Education and Health in the Nursing College at the Federal University of Pernambuco, where I was invited for talking about my research on Freire and Milani. Nelise has completed in 2018 a graduate school program presenting a thesis on her work as coordinator inspired by Freire's constructs.

Lea has a degree in Pedagogy and teaches two of the four fifth-grade classes (morning and afternoon) at the Freire-inspired School. She has been teaching in the elementary school for 23 years. I observed her afternoon class. She is very committed to her work and her rights as a public-school educator. She updates her colleagues on Union meetings, elections, decisions, protests. I'm sure her "Freirean" spirit was one of the reasons the coordinator put me in touch with her.

Mary has a degree in psycho-pedagogy and teaches one of the four fourth-grade classes at the Freirean School. Maria is very critical of the system and her ideas are clearly changing some of her students' minds. She has a strict Marxist within her. She

was the first one to show me all the material used for the fourth graders and the recent online compliances the municipality demands from public school teachers. She also brought her husband, who teaches history in the state public school, who is a very enthusiast supporter of Paulo Freire.

Marcelo, a 10 year- old 4th grader was very outspoken when I asked him about his school experience. In class, he was quiet but active and interested in participating in all activities. He was very close friend of one of the two students in the Autism spectrum class and often would translate his friend's words and expressions to me.

Leticia is an almost 60-year-old student in the evening program EJA (*Educação para Jovens e Adultos*/ Education for Young People and Adults). She has already learned how to read and write. During the day she works as a seamstress. Despite her husband's criticism, she keeps going to school to learn more and not let herself get discouraged when he says that she is "too old to go to school."

Ira Shor (real name) is a professor of City University of New York. In addition to writing his own books, he worked with Paulo Freire for a number of years and co-authored *A Pedagogy for Liberation*. They became close friends and had a long history of intellectual and friendly connection. I invited Professor Shor for a conference at UMass Amherst on the legacy of Milani and Freire and the significance of their theories and pedagogies in today's world.

Zanna started her Pedagogy degree when she was young but had to quit for health reasons. She returned to her studies in the early 2000's and earned her degree in Psycho-pedagogy. She was actually born in a school, since her mother, also a school teacher, did

not have time to get to the hospital.

When she was younger, she volunteered to watch the children of the adult students her father taught in evening classes. During the day, she works as an elementary school coordinator in a private school and in the evenings, she is a substitute teacher in two schools working in the EJA program on alternate days. One of them is the Freire-inspired School (twice a week). She participates in an adult literacy project entitled “Chapéu de Palha” (Straw Hat) teaching reading and writing to sugar cane workers in-between the harvesting periods using Paulo Freire’s method.

Alex is the vice academic manager and spokespeople of a Freirean institute that gives assistance to elementary and middle school teachers. He was part of renewing the institution commitment with Freire’s ideals. Alex was very responsive to my requests, giving the first interview on the very day that I asked. He also told me about the weekly Freirean Tea hour in the *Escola*, a kind of book club on Freire’s work that is open to educators. I was able to attend two of these meetings where the *Pedagogy of Hope* was discussed.

Pamela is one of the schools’ academic (didactic) coordinators. They are seven coordinators for a school of 12 classes (middle school). At the time of the interview, she was also the coordinator of the first-year class that I observed, a member of the recruitment commission, a history and a geography teacher. She also volunteered as an Italian teacher for immigrants. Nowadays, she is also the vice president of the school. Pamela is a thoughtful, elegant, soft-spoken, and very gentle person.

Felice is one of the Italian teachers in the middle school that I observed in the

first-year class. She has a degree in Literature and Modern languages, has a degree in psych-pedagogy and a specialization in teaching Italian. Her mother was a teacher in a school in Milano that also followed Don Milani's pedagogy. Two teachers strongly suggested I interview Pagani because she is regarded by some colleagues as a female version of Don Milani.

Alvaro is the art teacher, clearly loved by all students. He has an excellent sense of humor and very creative activities. He worked closely with Felice and Pamela in the laboratories (interdisciplinary courses) of Expression (Art and Italian) and Patrimony (Art and History).

Beatrice was a very sweet first-grade student (in 2017) who was born in Brazil and immigrated to Italy. She interacts very well with her peers in class. Her joy to have me in class was clear. She appreciated speaking Portuguese with me.

Bernardo is a student in the first grade (in 2017) exhibited a great level of participation in class. He is a very talkative and intelligent boy who does not let his learning disability stop him from being one of the most creative students in the classroom.

Edoardo Martinelli (real name) is a retired community educator with a degree in Community Pedagogy and one of Don Lorenzo Milani's former students. He is also a former Union leader. Today, he is a member of the *Centro di Formazione e Ricerca Don Lorenzo Milani e Scuola di Barbiana* (Don Lorenzo Milani e Scuola di Barbiana Research and Formation Center)

Vita is a physical education teacher, who also organizes theatrical projects based

in corporal expressions. She is one of the oldest teachers at the school, there since 1978, nearly 40 years. She certainly is a very energetic woman whose breadth of experience is clear from the way she speaks and acts.

Perla is a volunteer at the school library and a former Italian, History and Geography teacher of the Milani-inspired School. Like Vidotto, Torselli has many memories of the school. She worked there from 1990 until 2012, as has been interested in Don Milani's ideas and thoughts. since the sixties.

Nanni Banchi is the president of the *Centro di Formazione e Ricerca Don Lorenzo Milani e Scuola di Barbiana* and was the carpenter of the School of Barbiana. He used to teach carpentry to Don Milani's students as the request of Don Milani. At the time, his communist ideologies gave him serious preconceptions about religion and he was not interested in listening to the ideas of the Catholic priests. After Milani's death, he started studying Milanian ideas and ended up a "convert."

In the following section I present narrative analysis informed by Gee's seven building tasks for discourse analysis as tools to analyze the data set. (2014b). The combination of these two lenses disclosed how intertextual work could help in my own path of understanding and intervention in the world (2014b, p. 2) and in the field of education.

Data Analysis Tools

Narrative as an interactive and interpretive approach is one of the modes that

helps to transform knowing into telling stories (Sandelowski, 1991). Narrative analytical approach is the main tool used in this project because it considers data collection as a tool to describe human lives.

Narrative inquiry is a relevant tool of analysis in this context because language is a social practice tied to reinterpretation, contestation, recreation of historical moments in life that are also affected by the moment in history in which being narrated (during the interviews). The narrative inquiry is a response against the project of making something scientific out of everything that is really biographical (Sandelowski, 1991) In my integrative process of analysis, I look for the forms that disrupt and interrogate historical events where the ambiguous and contradictory opposing subjectivities and modes of self-formation are possible.

Long term, present, distant, and projected moments of the participants lives are snapshots of their existence, but all of them are relevant moments for understanding the human being as a subject of a social reality that is represented and retold in this research. In this study, the subjects are learners and educators. Among them, I am one more subject bringing my narrative and carrying the responsibility of respecting their interpretations and their backgrounds, as Freire and Milani have always defended in the process of creating schools. Through the processes of analyzing narratives, I was able to find the voice of the participants in multiple social-cultural-educational contexts.

Therefore, the narrative analysis process is the big umbrella that that is informed by the seven building task tools theorized by Gee (2014 a). These guiding questions help me to look closely at language use among the participants, in student work, between

Freire's and Milani's scholarship. These analytical tools worked connected with a narrative critical analysis:

- 1) Significance tool: considering vocabulary and grammar devices that were selected by my interlocutors and myself to make things either more or less significant.
- 2) Activities or practices tool: what I say and do and how these things make an impact?
What socially-situated identities and activities do these social languages describe?
- 3) Identity tool: how the participants use language or how the language is recognized based on their identity or role in group? How is agency demonstrated by the participants?
- 4) Relationships and connection building tools: here I two types of tools to ask what sort of relationships and connections the participants are establishing or have been established in the group, the context, the environment, their position in the world and in the historical moment, and with me, with the students, and with others. What associations are being made among things and people, or what connections are lacking and how is this represented in the language used?
- 5) Politics tool: one of the most important, in my opinion, because it shows how the participant sees the distribution of social goods in the world which directly correlates to their connection, or lack of it, with Freire and Milani. What ideologically significant meaning and/or metaphors are there?
- 6) Sign systems and knowledge tool: how the participants use language to build or express privilege or not? How is different world language use negotiated? How is the academic or school jargon applied, if applied? What social language(s) are involved in the interviewees' answers or in the speech collected as data during fieldnote taking?

Languages, dialects, images and other semiotic artifacts are important here.

- 7) Big D discourse tool: how are the participants using language and ways of acting, interacting, thinking, believing, evaluating, showing or not showing emotions, dressing, using devices to enact an identity that can be socially recognizable? The big D discourse is Gee's conceptualization that analysis of our identity within specific social contexts in contrast to the small d that refers only to language-in-use in any context. Here I observe how negative, affirmative, declarative, interrogative and imperative sentences are used to express ideas, feelings and positionality in the world.

The lens of narrative and discourse analysis are previously sheltered by the theoretical framework of power relations perspectives from Foucault and genealogical analysis theorized by Nietzsche and further developed by Foucault. For Foucault, analysis can take apart and shatter the unit of person's being, thereby extending his sovereignty to the events of the past (Allen, 2018; Foucault, 1971).

Therefore, it means that through breaking apart my empirical material through analyzing their narratives and their discourses, I can infer connections and meanings with the influences that the participants have in their lives, their contributions for the present, for the future.

These tools are important in developing considerations on their discourses as evidence of ideologies; their relationship with Freire and Milani's ideas and with government and school policies; their social languages based on their practices and social roles that others can recognize (Gee, 2011); their vocabulary and grammar choices; their agency; and their relationship with me, the researcher.

Questioning Validity, Reliability, and Triangulation

Long-term data engagement, which means, preparation of fieldnotes, reading and rereading and writing and rewriting, consultation with sources who are experts in Freire, Milani, and in the field of critical literacy, and discussions with my mentor were the valid forms that supported my interpretations, credibility, and clarity about this study. However, drawing on feminist poststructuralist perspectives, these notions are questioned.

Taking in consideration the notion of crystallization instead of the discussion of validity, reliability, and triangulation, I echo McDonough's (2014) questioning of if in postmodern influenced work there is any fixed point that can be triangulated. Richardson (2005) proposes crystallization as a method that combines symmetry and substance with a variety of shapes, transmutations, multi-dimensionality, and I would add, multiculturalities and multilingual structures.

With the idea of not having a two-dimensional object, like a triangle, to validate findings, the postmodernist deconstruction draws on the idea of crystals as prisms that reflect external phenomena, ideas, and concepts and that refract them within themselves, resulting in findings that have new colors, new forms, and creating new colorful rays that go in many directions.

Building on Richardson's concept, Ellingson (2009, p. 601) proposes constructing qualitative research methods as a continuum and navigating the possibilities of analysis and interpretation in fluid and diverse ways. There are many forms of representation or

telling the research story, and not only one truth, and each research project holds unique constraints and opportunities.

Reminding How My Social Identities Shaped This Work

From my point of view as a multicultural and multilingual ethnographer researcher, language teacher, and former journalist, this project allowed me to exploit my multiple roles and background experiences. In many situations I felt like an insider more than an outsider. I was invited to participate in many different events, in line with the teachers' desire to take advantage of, and include visitors in, the learning process. Exactly the same thing that Don Milani would propose when he had visitors in the schools he created: Calenzano and Barbiana.

From my own point of view and from the perspective of other educators, I had the chance to reflect on my other educators work in refashioning ideas to position the work of Freire and Milani in the current time. As Don Luis Corzo suggests, it is important to challenge and filter all the pieces of information and, in this case, data collection in order to refashion and reinvent ideas, without losing the essence of what is being taught.

I am joining two teams - Freirean and Milanian - and trying to expand a timid movement to one not only abstract and theoretical, but stronger and highly practical. This project was enlivened by and filtered through my own experiences as a Latina, Brazilian, Italian, and American woman who experiences the discomfort and the privileges of living in-between cultures and who learns and teaches with the awareness that no social practice is politically neutral.

The combination of primary and secondary sources represented in dialogues

between and about Freire and Milani passed first, through my lived experience and later, emerged as an interdisciplinary project in which practical and performative views of pedagogy, politics, and cultural studies are united through literature review, letter writing, and analysis.

Another relevant aspect of working with Freire and Milani relates to my own identity as multilingual speaker (Portuguese, Italian and English). The knowledge of these three languages greatly facilitated this inquiry, especially since most of Milani's scholarship is rendered in Italian. Freire has been translated into English but being able to access to his original writings and interviews that were never translated into English, was satisfying, stimulating, and insightful.

CHAPTER 4

WORKING WITH THE DATA SET

Não sou esperançoso por pura teimosia, mas por imperativo existencial e histórico.

I am hopeful, not out of mere stubbornness, but out of an existential, concrete imperative.

Freire (2016)

In this chapter I present relevant parts of my data collection based on narrative analysis and foregrounding instances when discourses are enacted through talk, interaction, and text production. I also consult with some of Gee's analytical tool kit for help in the process of interpreting participant discourses and my own inferences and interpretations of the interviews, observations, and fieldwork notes. The analytical tool has the support a theoretical framework that combines Foucault's power relations and the theory of genealogy based on Nietzsche's and Foucault's perspectives with Gee's and Janks' analytical practices.

Narrative analysis helps to reflect on these issues and on the identities, relationships, systems of knowledge and beliefs, and questions of power and status during my interaction with the participants, during text production and interpretation, during the translation process, and in many instances working with data sources.

Narratives combined with discourses spelled with a capital D involve more than language. The aspect of discourse with a little “d” , also under the category of narratives, refers to the language-in-use or conversations and stories within a community (Gee, 2011), but carries in it other ideas, contributions, prejudices, and information that come from Discourse with a big “D”, such as monolingual school environment, media such as radio and TV from a monolingual country, online social networks among other spaces where the parents participate.

In terms of power relations, Fairclough mentions that Foucault made popular the concept of discourse, conjecturing that the relationship between the use of a language and the verbal context is not transparent because context affects what is being said or written and also the way that these words are being interpreted (Fairclough, 1993). The analysis takes in consideration the ways that participants represent, recast, reflect and think about Freire’s and Milani’s ideas as resources for their work in education and their effects in students’ lives but also in their interactions with the world.

The notion of Discourse with big D sets a larger context for the analysis of discourse within the analysis of language in use. The language in use is a form of social practice tied to historical contexts, reproduced or contested, and where different interests are served (Gee, 1990; Gee, 2011; Fairclough, 1993). At the same time, the language in use is socially shaped and constitutive of identities, relations, system of knowledge and belief.

The goal of discourse analysis is not just to describe how language works but also to intervene in problems and controversies worldwide by investigating how

power relations in contexts of dominance, discrimination, xenophobia and control can disclose/reveal cloudy and clear relations of social inequalities (Gee, 2011; Wodak & Meyer, 2008; Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002; Fairclough, 1996).

For Gee (2011), as a descriptive approach, discourse analysis can also be seen as “unscientific” due to the fact of being related to someone’s interest or passion. However, all discourse analysis needs to be critical because language itself is political. And at this point, the importance of recognizing narrative inquiry analysis is crucial in order to remark on persuasive messages, meanings, motivated actions, and to realize a distinction between the representation and what is being represented (Robert & Shenhav, 2014). As Gee argues, language and grammar are not the most important, but instead the combination of saying-doing-being-valuing-believing, which is clearly found through a thoughtful analysis of the narrative.

I based most of my data on the interviews conducted with participants and on observations in different settings. This analysis work elicits perceptions of the meaning of pedagogical strategies that foster consciousness and critical literacy as important influences from Freire and Milani and related to empowering education actors (educators, students, friends of schools) in the promotion of social justice.

Therefore, through the lens of discourse and narrative analysis, I noticed how Freire’s and Milani’s ideas helped to shape my participants and my own levels of confidence, identities, language use, and social interaction with and in the world. It happens because of the instantaneous connection with participants that, like me, believe in revisiting both educators’ ideas and recasting it in the world. The analytical process did

not end with Freire, Milani and my participants, for it includes my research practices, the diversity of language and culture interactions, and the way I engage in this work informed by ethnographic case studies.

The interactions did not happen only in the school environment, but during strike protests, voluntary work, lunch and dinner time, car and train rides, social events, among others. The close analysis of interviews and field work notes uncovered the complex nature of how ideas can be reassembled over the time, and not in a chronologically, but instead foregrounded by social and political occurrences and by cultural events.

The material collected from interviews, fieldnotes, observations is untied here and was initially, but only initially, organized through open codes created from meaningful excerpt choice, after having transcribed all the interviews and dialogues. I tried to create codes or nodes with the use of a software program to highlight important topics being discussed with each participant in different sections and contexts.

This initial step soon became very limiting because I noticed that the process of analysis was about treating words and labels and decontextualizing from important bigger concepts and ideas. Making discourses codable units and equating qualitative data analysis can mean to search for non-existing patterns or to create themes without a clear purpose nor utility due to the lack of a clear conceptual foundation (St. Pierre & Jackson, 2014; Goldstein, 2011; Nespor & Barylske, 1991; Young, 1969).

The real work with the data happened through reading, rereading, writing, and rewriting to identify some situations that were mentioned very and moderately frequently by the participants.

The constant exercise of reading and rereading the data, transcribing, and translating it into English helped me to see more clearly the students' and teachers' interpretation or recasting of their work based on, inspired by, or just aligned with Freire and Milani. All the data is ultimately my own interpretation helped by the analytical theories and illustrated through the selection of excerpts. The whole process of dialogic discourse is sometimes intuitively but mostly very consciously presented by the participants and by me.

Findings

My readings took me to highlight two important concepts for both educators, namely consciousness and the understanding of each one's positionality, by reading and understanding world systems and connections. For me, these are the main points that connect Freire and Milani.

As a consequence of visiting and revising the data, I arrived at the findings presented in this chapter. They reflect my search and interest for points of contact, dialectically and dialogically across the schools' work and educators' visions.

The findings also helped me to answer the two research questions on understanding how educators are moving beyond rhetorical ways of teaching and beyond banking education (Freire, 1998). Banking education refers to the traditional view of students as containers in which to deposit knowledge, an issue in both public schools that I visited for this project. The analysis process helped me also to understand how educators are interested in creating conditions for students to question and/or actively participate in the world.

For the remainder of the chapter, I present four thematic findings that reflect the main ideas from both schools that hold, from a narrative analysis perspective, power as windows into the individual and social world and which are also bridges to the sociopolitical context (Robert & Shenhav, 2014) that are important to acknowledge, study, and propagate in other learning and teaching settings.

For analyzing the four thematic findings, I followed Richmond's (2002) suggestions of developing a story map from which I abstract a brief biographical presentation (see the participants section) that highlights the participants' institutional positions and a bit of their ideologies and beliefs. The findings are illustrated by excerpts of the stories told to me during interviews and reflections on possible connections enabled by what Richmond (2002) calls a "constructive, creative, and considered analysis of the narrative impulse" (p. 2).

As a result, the four main finding titles are: including all learners; reading the world; collaborating across discipline and modes; and, raising consciousness and citizenship awareness. Post-coding analysis scholars (St. Pierre & Jackson, 2014) insists that research is not tidily arranged and constrained and does not unfold in a linear trajectory that goes from data collection to analysis to representation. Based on the post-coding process of analysis, I uncover and present the findings that are the results of entanglement of reading through transcriptions in the original language and then in translation, through field notes, cards, photos, e-mails, emotions, and memories. The findings are informed by analytical, especially, and also theoretical frameworks that

helped me in the process of interlinking and increasing possibilities of interpreting ideas and understanding new concepts.

The four findings are presented in the next section. They are, as I mentioned earlier, illustrated with excerpts from the data collection and analyzed through the lenses of narrative, discourse analysis and selected tools (Gee, 2014; Robert & Shenhav, 2014; Richmond, 2002; Sandelowski, 1991). I will start with the theme “Including All Learners”, followed by “Reading the World”, then “Increasing Multimodal and Multi-Disciplinary”, and finally “Raising Consciousness and Citizenship Awareness.”

Including All Learners

Non c'è nulla di più ingiusto che far parti uguali tra disuguali (School of Barbiana, 1996). Translated, this statement says that there is nothing more unfair than to give equal treatment to unequal people. Milani and his students wrote it in *Letter to a Teacher* (1996). Milani-inspired School, teacher Felice, reminds me about this phrase when we start a conversation on the inclusive aspect of the school, where she teaches Italian. This quote is also the opening statement in the school website where all activities, homework, and didactic units are posted.

The choice of incorporating citations by Milani in the school presentation and teacher discourse indicates how the participants are situated in a big D discourse, and are using language to address and enact an identity that can be socially recognizable. This school identity, apparent in the teachers' discourse is visible on the walls and website of the school through images and quotations of Milani, connects its students with Milani's

ideas of inclusion and social justice for the students who would not have experienced affirmation and inclusion in schools without the same social commitments.

The same practice is evident at the Paulo Freire-inspired School, where both visually through images of Freire's quotations on the walls and in a discursively – through how most teachers express ideas, feelings, and world positionality – it reflects Freirean ideas especially with regard of inclusion and, student empowerment. In interviews and other discourse, teachers state that students are taught that they can do well in life through education.

In both schools, which tend to equity through structural choices, it was clear that inclusion means to offer special tools to the students who need them and to not reproduce meritocracy schools where students with social, economic, physical and family advantages keep progressing while the ones without the same privileges fall behind. As educators, we are still struggling with inclusion of students with special needs and from other countries, and with respecting and honoring diversity in the classroom.

School access is certainly different now compared to 1950s and 1960s when Freire and Milani started their "activism" against oppression and unfair access to education. Nevertheless, some of my participants recognize as their mission to keep working to guarantee inclusion and fair treatment for all. These commitments signal an awareness among teachers and administrators that of how schools are organized and teaching as political practices that have a hold on the distribution of social goods.

The following excerpt with Perla, a retired Italian and History teacher of the Milani-inspired School, and now volunteer at the library and in the program of teaching

Italian to immigrants, confirms the strong motto of inclusion of this Italian school. My question was about what she would consider the strongest manifestation of Milani's ideas in the Milani-inspired School, since we know it is impossible to reinstate all the School of Barbiana's practices anywhere.

Translation:

Perla: Diciamo che il tema dell'inclusione è il tema fondamentale. L'idea di farsi che tutte le classi siano uguali tra di loro e eterogenee al loro interno cioè che prevedano una parte di bambini disagiati, una parte intermedia una parte che traina tutta la classe, no? Perché, D. Milani dice che non c'è cosa più ingiusta che fare parte uguale tra diseguali. Per ciò questo cercare di salvaguardare il proprio bambino più svantaggiato con l'aiuto e quelli che dalla famiglia hanno ricevuto più strumenti continuano ad essere sopportati perché anche i genitori possono avere una grande importanza. Quindi questa è una cosa.

Poi, nella didattica, mirare al centro cioè tenere sempre a cercare di includere tutti quanti nell'insegnamento cooperativo nell'insegnamento tra pari è un altro caposaldo della Scuola di Barbiana. Diciamo l'intervento dell'attualità, l'eruzione dell'attualità, il giornale in classe o quindi il fatto di confrontarsi con tematiche dell'oggi, reali. Di non considerare quindi i bambini come un vaso da riempire, ma come persone con cui crescere con cui interloquire.

Perla: Let's say that the theme of inclusion is the fundamental one. The idea of making sure that all the classes are the same among them and heterogeneous within them, that means, that we foresee a part of disadvantaged children, an intermediate part, a part that draws the whole class, right? Because, D. Milani says that there is no more unjust thing than being an equal part of unequal. This is a form of trying to safeguard your most disadvantaged child with help and those who have received more from the family continue to be helped anyway because their parents can also be very important. That is one thing.

Then, in teaching, to aim at the center, that is to always keep trying to include everyone in the cooperative teaching in peer teaching is another cornerstone of the School of Barbiana. Let's consider the intervention of current events, the eruption of current events, the newspaper in the classroom or the fact of dealing with issues of today, real. Not to consider children as a vase to be filled, but as people with whom to grow with whom to speak.

In her analysis of inclusion, Perla brings a relevant interpretation about the reflection of inclusion that is inspired in Milani and in the School of Barbiana and

Freire's ideas, that is not just about the inclusion per se in the school environment and in the classroom, but in the lesson plan or didactic of teaching as she calls it. In this didactic, the cooperative learning can give a great contribution. Perla also combines the idea of inclusion and peer teaching with including the learners who need special attention to the current world events. She then, highlights one of the known Freire's ideas, the banking concept, that says that the learner is not an empty vase to be filled with information, but people to teach and to learn from.

The Freire-inspired School carries out intense inclusion work with special needs students, centered around the efforts of the teacher who coordinates the special needs department, who I call here Elsa, a pseudonym. During my period at the school, she invited me to a fieldtrip with the special needs students and their special needs educators, who are called *Agentes de Apoio ao Desenvolvimento Escolar Especial (AADEEs)* in Portuguese, which can be translated as Support Agents/Officers for Special School Development. The school has 15 support agents, either fully trained or in training, who work in classrooms with about 20 special needs students. The special needs students are not pulled out of classrooms. They stay with all the other students and are accompanied by a support agent who can help up to two students with class activities. In evening classes, for adults, there is one fully trained teacher who works with a class of special needs adults.

When a Smith College professor recommended that I look for the Milanian school in the northwest of Italy, he mentioned the comprehensive environment and intensive work of the teachers in the school, but I had no idea how important the inclusion

component was in this school. I had a better sense of the school's "inclusivist" aspect once I was in Italy.

In my conversations with Italians outside of the school about my research and my field research location, I constantly heard the comment "I know this school. It is the one with lots of *handicap* students." And then I would find myself in a situation of explaining that it is not a special needs school, but an inclusive school where all students are welcome and treated with respect and with attention to their own special needs. Perla and Vita, the two senior teachers whom I interviewed, explained that since its founding in the early 1970s, the Milani-inspired School acquired a reputation in the entire region for being a school for "difficult" students. On the other hand, they describe it as a hospitable school where "valuable attention" has been given to all students since its very first day.

In many ways this "valuable attention" can be identified. It happens not only because of the strong presence of teachers in the classroom helping special needs student, but because of many other structural aspects of the school. Examples include the 10-minute pauses between each long break outside the school in an open square right after lunch time, longer hours at school (longer than conventional school times), less homework at home, a strong investment in transdisciplinary courses, and individual special attention that I witnessed each teacher give to students who needed more help.

Felice, the Italian teacher, talked to me about her relationship with the students and the aspect of inclusion of one of the students (Bernardo) who had a spelling dyslexia issue. Bernardo is knowledgeable and has a high level of participation in all of his classes at the Milani-inspired School. He performs many literacy practices in class, such as

acting, discussing themes, and inquiring, but he does not write in the same pattern as most people. I did not know about his learning disorder in my first days at the school, and when he asked me to read a PowerPoint presentation with him for his geography and statistics laboratory class, I noticed that writing was more challenging for him. His family had already signed the consent form, so I asked to talk with one of the coordinators, Pamela, and with the Italian teacher about his specific situation and they explained it to me. In the following excerpt, Felice, the Italian teacher, tells me more about him.

Translation:

Felice: Bernardo mi ha detto l'altro giorno: prof. Le devo dire che lei è molto materna, secondo me. Lui è DSA – Disturbo Specifico dell'Apprendimento. Non ce la farà mai a non esserlo. Lui è disortografico. Tra l'altro lui è un DSA particolare perché per esempio nella grammatica, che è un punto di caduta per i DSA, lui è fortissimo, ma perché ha una memoria mostruosa. È fantastico. Sa delle cose sulla mitologia che io a volte non mi ricordo. (...). Nei DSA. Quindi c'è il contenuto, l'organizzazione del testo, la grammatica, il lessico e l'ortografia. Per il DSA, ho una diversa griglia, in cui l'ortografia non c'è. Per legge, non la valuti. Cioè, non è che gli dici: tu scrivi corretto, però tu gli dici, tu hai questa difficoltà e non te la valuto, se no dovrei darti quattro ogni volta. E poi il contenuto ha un peso maggiore rispetto alla grammatica, appunto perché per i DSA è più difficile. Io per Bernardo, uso una griglia ancora diversa. Ho fatto un misto tra le due cose, per cui non gli considero l'ortografia, però ad esempio il lessico, perché molti DSA hanno problema di lessico, nel senso che i termini specifici, quelli che si usano di meno, fanno più fatica a impararli proprio per questo problema

Felice: Bernardo told me the other day: “Teacher, I must tell you that you are very maternal, in my opinion.” He is DSA (in Italian) - Specific Learning Disorder. He will always be this way. He has spelling dyslexia. Among other things, he has a particular DSA because, for example, in grammar, which is a failing point in this case, he is very strong - but because he has an extraordinary memory. He is fantastic. He knows things about mythology that I sometimes do not remember. (...) For DSA children, I have a different grid, in which the spelling is not there. By law, I do not evaluate it. That means that I don't have to say, “you need to write correctly,” instead I tell him, you have this difficulty and I do not evaluate it, otherwise I would give you a grade of four (from one to ten) every time. And then the content has a larger weight than grammar, precisely because it is more difficult for children with learning disability. For Bernardo, I use a different grid. I created a combination of the two, so I do not consider the spelling, but for example, the lexicon, because many children with learning disability have a lexicon problem, in the sense that the specific terms, those that are used less, are more difficult to learn from this problem of

dell'automatismo... più sei esposto, più ti resta in automatico in testa. Ovviamente i termini specifici se sei meno esposto come un normo-pensante, una volta che lo hai studiato due, tre volte ti resta in testa. Per loro [DSA] è molto più difficile conservare questo ricordo. Bernardo invece no, ha un lessico pazzesco.

Simone: Uno studente mi ha detto che gli piace studiare qui perché i ragazzi che hanno più difficoltà vengono accompagnati più da vicino.

Felice: Questa è una cosa di tradizione. Le famiglie di DSA scelgono di mandarli da noi perché pensano che ci sia più attenzione.

Questa è una sensazione che poi si traduce in realtà. Noi non facciamo tanto di diverso da quello che ci dice la legge. Il problema è che sono gli altri che non la applicano tanto.

automatism... the more exposed you are, the more it remains automatically in the head. Obviously, if you are less exposed to specific terms in the standard ways of thinking, once you study two, three times, the concept remains in the head. It is much more difficult for learning disability people with this kind of dyslexia to retain this memory. Bernardo, however, has a great vocabulary.

Simone: A student told me that she likes studying here because the students who have the most difficulty are more closely accompanied.

Felice: This is a traditional thing. Families with DSA children choose to send them to us because they think there is more attention. That is a feeling that then translates into reality. We do not do much differently than what the law tells us. The problem is that the other schools do not apply it as much as they should.

As Felice states in this excerpt, there is no magic treatment in the Milani-inspired School other than schools' policies that are aligned with equity. This inclusionary practice is an everyday way of being in this school community which, ironically enough, is aligned with government policies that support differently abled children in the region. This socially-situated identity of the school has recognition from the citizens of this Italian northwest town, as I witnessed each time that I mentioned to local people about my research in this specific school.

This strong sense of inclusion in the Milani-inspired School extends also to the immigrant students, who have been increasingly arriving over the last 40 years, following the social changes in Italy (more on immigrant inclusion on findings numbers 1.2 and 3 of this chapter). Since finishing my fieldwork, I have been in regular contact via phone,

e-mail, and social media with the pedagogical coordinators of both schools. In June 2018, during a phone conversation with Pamela, the coordinator and now also vice-principal of the Milani-inspired School, talked to me about the renewal of their status as a school that develops research, and about their position against the wave of rejection to immigration that is growing in Europe.

Pamela mentioned to me that banner that is now on the school door, contains a famous Milani quote. Later, she sent the message on the banner to me by e-mail (see the quotation and the banner's image below). This took place at the beginning of a new administration in Italy, when one of the vice prime ministers ordered that help be denied to some immigrants' boats arriving in Italy, forcing people to wait at sea until Spain stepped in to help. The banner is decorated with many colorful ribbons and is a statement against racism.

This episode reflects a tendency or even a tradition of the Milani-inspired School to engage students, teachers, and parents in reading the world, and to take position against unfair social and political decisions, such as the Italian Minister of Internal Affairs' decision to take strict measurements against undocumented immigrants in Italy.

It is part of the school agenda to deploy critical literacy skills to examine power and discourse relation practices within the political and social conditions of the country (Comber & Simpson, 2001). In terms of the language used here, the positionality of the school is about building relationships and a connection building tool that inquiries about the sort of relationships and connections that the participants (in this case, the school in

general) build to examine the context and environment, and their position in the world and in the historical moment.

In one of the letters to his niece Cristina, Freire (2000) emphasized the idea that in school, everyone should learn about the defense of freedom and alertness to its betrayal as democratic duties. Therefore, acts such as symbolical banner as a form of protesting against the ethical slips of morality of governments goes beyond just studying and learning, it is also a way of producing knowledge and offering a great lesson on how to strengthen democracy.

The language used to inquire about the historical moment is reminiscent of a famous quote by Milani regarding the old problem of discrimination against foreigners he other especially when they come from less economically developed countries.

“Se voi avete il diritto di dividere il mondo in italiani e stranieri, allora io dirò che, nel vostro senso, io non ho Patria e reclamo il diritto di dividere il mondo in diseredati e oppressi da un lato, privilegiati e oppressori dall’altro. Gli uni son la mia Patria, gli altri i miei stranieri.”

(L’obbedienza non è più una virtù)

Translation:

“If you have the right to divide the world into Italians and foreigners, I would say that, according to your logic, I do not have a Nation and claim the right to divide the world into the dispossessed and oppressed on one side, and the privileged and oppressors on the other. The former ones are my Nation, the latter are my foreigners.”

(Obedience is no longer a virtue)



Figure 1: Banner *Obedience is no longer a virtue*

Reflecting on the many meanings of the word *inclusion* and connecting these reflections to the concepts of knowledge and power, I did not limit myself to listening to teachers, scholars, and educators. Instead, I expanded the search and analysis of the discussions on critical literacy and dialogue, including also the interviews and informal talks with the younger participants (two focal students: Marcelo and Bernardo) and one adult learner (Letícia). I present “their voices” in the following section of this first finding.

Listening to Learners

“Is Paulo Freire the owner of this school? If so, I need to talk to him. I have some complaints”, Marcelo, 4th grade, at the Freire-inspired School in Brazil, told me in our second interview, during which he wanted mostly to talk about the school's situation and be sure that I would use my privileged position vis-a-vis the teachers and coordinators to bring his complaints to the school administration, or even to Freire, if necessary. Identifying the system of connections, privilege, and power and using the active participation tool, Marcelo was interested in sitting down for an interview since the day

he brought back the consent form. He knew he could use this opportunity--with his voice being recorded--to transmit to the coordinator and to other teachers his complaints about bad situations at the school.

Marcelo: Tem que ter uma reforma na escola. Quando a gente entra nesse banheiro está cheio de cocô. Não dá para a gente sentar ou fazer necessidade essas coisas (...) tem que prender a respiração (...)

Simone: E como é que a gente pode resolver isso?

Marcelo: Eu vou falar com a coordenação e depois com a prefeitura e depois se ninguém fizer nada a gente tem que organizar um protesto. (...) Veja a senhora mesma. Porque não dá para viver assim. Agora eu acho que lá na prefeitura eles não querem fazer nada para consertar o nosso banheiro e fazer a reforma no telhado que quando chove cai água. (...) Tem que ter uma paralisação e tem que ter um protesto na frente da prefeitura.

Simone: O que vocês acham do diálogo? Pode ajudar muito, não é?

Marcelo: É! Agora, assim eu também queria que a prefeitura pagasse as nossas professoras o que está atrasado. Elas estão fazendo tudo para gente passar para frente então a prefeitura só quer que elas façam isso e não ganhe dinheiro. É preciso que tenha diálogo. Agora, eu preferiria que pagasse as professoras daqui e que fizesse uma reforma na escola: nos telhados, na porta.

Simone: Vocês têm que conversar com a coordenadora.

Marcelo: Mas não adianta conversar não. Eu queria muito que tivesse uma porta mais resistente, que ajeitassem o telhado da escola, a biblioteca limpa. O ventilador melhor na escola. A biblioteca era muito pior. Era uma bagunça. Era tudo jogado no chão. Se não fosse por essa bibliotecária que surgiu agora, a gente não teria

Translation:

Marcelo: It's necessary to renovate the school. When we go in the bathroom it's full of poop. We can't sit or take care of our needs, things like that (...) we have to hold our breath (...)

Simone: So how can we solve that?

Marcelo: I'm going to talk to the coordinator and then City Hall and then if no one fixes anything, we have to organize a protest. (...) Mrs., try to see it yourself. Because we cannot live like this. Now, I think that in City Hall they don't want to do anything to fix our bathroom and to fix the school's roof because it rains inside. (...) We need a strike and to go protest in front of City Hall.

Simone: What you guys think about dialogue? It can help a lot, right?

Marcelo: Yes! Now, I also want the City to pay our teachers all they are owed that is overdue. The teachers do everything to help us to get ahead, yet the City just wants them to do that without getting paid. Dialogue is necessary. Now, I'd rather they pay the teachers here and renovate the school: the roofs, the door.

Simone: You have to talk to the coordinator.

Marcelo: But it's no use talking. I really wish there were a stronger door, that they straighten the school's roof, clean the library. A better fan at school. The library was much worse. It was a mess. Everything was thrown on the floor. If it were not for the new librarian who showed up now, we would not have that library any

mais essa biblioteca. A gente tem que ir à prefeitura para resolver o caso da nossa escola. Simone: Eu vou levar essas reclamações de vocês para a coordenação.

more. We have to go to City Hall to solve our school's situation. Simone: I'm going to take your complaints to the coordinator.

It was supposed to be just another interview among all the nice conversations and interactions I was having with the students, but it became a clear example of how critical literacy manifests itself through the voice of a young student who was demanding improvements for all students at the school. It was an experience for which I am grateful and one of the highest accomplishments for me as an ethnographer.

I noticed that most articles and research that I used as sources for this project report the voices of educators and scholars, but few transcribe students' voices and their perspectives. Researchers recently have been increasingly addressing the importance of young students' participation by also giving voice to children as participants in the research process. Interviews with children require specific techniques, but it depends more on the abilities of the interviewer to elicit the participant's interest in the activity.

However, the inclusion of children's voices must be merely a symbolic act. Instead, social sciences should take charge of seeing children as articulate social actors who, through ethnographic and participatory research methods, can be heard for what they have to say about the world (James, 2007). It is also relevant to not forget that there are other possibilities of participation and being aware of the meaning of their statements in interviews.

Researchers, who are adults, are the ones who have the position at the end of the interviewing process of interviewing to edit and retain control over which children's

voices will have importance and will choose the parts to be presented at the end in the final written work (Clifford 1988; James, 2007). Researchers concludes the work later with their point of view, therefore, filtering children's opinions.

Although the focus of my research is not only young students, I acknowledge my role as ethnographer-editor for their voices and those of the adult interviewees. It can be the same regarding any participant, so it is important to be aware of this power dynamic regarding the role in order to commit to reproduce as much as possible the interviewee's opinion and own interpretation of the world.

Nevertheless, I want to mention here that I had an excellent reception from the young participants who had many requests to be heard. One of the requests to be interviewed came from a group of four students at the Freire-inspired School. They first wanted to be sure that my recorder was on because they wanted to take the opportunity and advantage of my "power" with the school administration to make some requests.

They started mentioning to me that they recognized the hard work of the teachers and that they were trying to find a way to have access to City Hall to let the mayor know that the teachers needed better salaries and that the roof and the bathrooms needed to be fixed. Marcelo was the most outspoken in the group and one of the first students to bring me back the assent form, so I decided to have him as a focal student participant.

Among the other three students, one is on the autism spectrum and does not have clear speech, but he was part of the conversation and his friends explained to me what he was saying. I represent here only Marcelo's narrative, who among other requests, wanted to confirm that I would be recording everything, and in the end, he wanted to be sure that

I would take their complaints to Nelise, the coordinator, which I certainly did. The students knew that a little power as a researcher could be put to good use to help them to fix things.

When Marcelo asked me if Paulo Freire was the owner of the school and to go talk to him, I was surprised by his confusion: while he knew to use what was being taught by his teacher Mary – to use his voice, inquire, and ask – he did not know that his school is public and, in certain ways also, belongs to him, to all, and to no one; he also did not know that Freire was dead.

The excerpts present in this study are small narratives that illustrate how the class dialogues about life issues resonate and gave students' awareness of what it means to be a citizen. It is not a "Marxist ideological imposition," as a right-wing Brazilian movement likes to call it, but it does mean not assuming political neutrality. It is about helping students think about their current situation and thinking consciously about their choices, as 4th grade teacher Mary mentioned in her conversation with me.

In another conversation that I had with Marcelo, when I informed him that I took his complaints to the coordinator, he decided to go a little further and see if my influence would also help to talk to higher authorities. Marcelo understood power relations and started making sense of how to use them. By using relationship building and the politics tools (Gee, 2014) within student discourse, he can build a small movement in a safe way.

There is a distinction between dominant Discourses that potentially bring social goods and non-dominant Discourses that do not bring social good but can bring solidarity within a particular social network (Gee, 2014; Gugliotta 2016). Such access by learners

to interviews with school visitors who the learners know can connect them with school power in many ways (and not only from top to bottom in a binary way) shapes our thinking, being, and doing.

To understand the power of a Discourse, it is helpful to think about social and political issues that carry the strength of denoting or building knowledge about a particular topic or practice. It means that language use is more than human beings talking to each other, but thinking about the way that they produce, reproduce, and reconstruct these Discourses. They exist before us and they may remain after we are no longer here (Gee, 2010, p. 35). The words and deeds are enacted sometimes for generations or across the social network in which they are inserted (among their school peers) and their power and different uses have to be acknowledged.

Under this perspective of continuity and strength of Discourse, the concept of literacy and discourses led me to consider also Foucault's (1995) concept of power that covers a broader sense of relations and interactions and considers power accountable for creating our social world as both a productive and coercive tool.

Sociologists state that all humans have something call 'face needs,' according to Gee (2014). He also complements that it means the sense of worth or dignity in all of us that we expect to be honored by others in society (p.125). Bringing sensitive issues like the desecrated state of the bathroom, including providing sensorial descriptions of it, Marcelo speaks up for dignity for him and the others. He also connects the use of his voice registered on the microphone (he wanted to be sure that I was turning it on before

he started talking) to further, through my intervention, some type of action. In this case, the action would be improving conditions at the school.

Because of the introduction that I made in class on my first day when I also talked about Freire and Milani, Marcelo registered that I was researching the Brazilian educator, so he wanted me to also talk to him, adding Freire to his understanding of power relations in his discourse. Marcelo also shows that he did not have much sense of school ownership or how City Hall collects money to maintain the school. Here is an excerpt of this conversation.

Marcelo: Esse Paulo Freire, da sua pesquisa e das imagens aqui, ele é o dono da escola?

Simone: Ele é um grande professor que nasceu aqui nessa região e muitos de nós, professores gostamos de aprender com ele sobre como ensinar.

Marcelo: Então quem paga a luz da escola?

Simone: Todo mundo paga. Com o dinheiro que as pessoas pagam de imposto, a gente paga as contas da escola. Todo brasileiro deve pagar imposto.

Marcelo: Mas não é melhor a prefeitura pagar?

Simone: A prefeitura recebe esse dinheiro das pessoas e fica responsável pelo bom uso dos impostos que a gente paga.

Marcelo: Ah, tá bom ... (com uma cara de quem não acredita muito em mim o no governo, considerando todas as reclamações que ele tinha feito antes).

Translation:

Marcelo: This Paulo Freire, from your research and from these images here, is he the school owner?

Simone: He was a great teacher who was born here in this region and many of us, teachers, like to learn from him about teaching.

Marcelo: So, who pays for the school's electric bill?

Simone: Everyone pays. With the money people pay taxes, we pay the school's bills. Every Brazilian has to pay taxes.

Marcelo: But is it not better if the city pays for it?

Simone: The city receives this money from the people and is responsible for the good use of the taxes we pay.

Marcelo: Ah, I see ... (making a face of someone who does not believe much in me or in the government, considering all the complaints he made earlier).

In the Milani-inspired School, Bernardo was my focal student and had similar thoughts about expecting things to be done by the city. He was one of the school's representatives for a municipal project to improve the parks nearby the school. The other

representative is a girl named Lenny (pseudonym also), who is Bernardo's classmate. The initiative serves to concretize the ideas of the children and to invite them to participate "in the decisions of the adults," as he and Lenny, the other representative from the school, explain to me. Lenny and Bernardo tell me that a group of students often went to City Hall to propose their ideas to improve mainly the central-western part of town. "We are especially addressing the gardens that are here around the school. Practically speaking, many ideas were impossible to realize, such as the proposal by some children last year to put in a pool, a difficult thing, but this year we are realizing that the architects will improve the play equipment that is already there, repainting it because it's are full of graffiti and even adding new ones," says Lenny.

Bernardo talks proudly about the initiative. In his words: *[S]iamo riusciti farci riconoscere come una vera istituzione. Siamo andati in municipio. Abbiamo fatto le vostre dovute proposte* (we have succeeded in making ourselves recognized as a true institution. We went to the Town Hall. We have made our proposals).

When I ask Bernardo if he thought the city was really going to do something, his answer was: *Non lo so. L'anno scorso, io ero nel consiglio anche nell'anno scorso, i bambini di quarta e terza della scuola Danio e non si è fatto niente. Io spero non succeda quest'anno altrimenti vado a protestare davanti al comune* (I don't know. Last year they didn't do anything. This year, if they don't do what we have decided, I will have to do some kind of protest). The year before, Bernardo was in elementary school and had already been chosen by his peers to represent the other school in this project. At the new

school, the Milani-inspired School, the students also voted for him (and Lenny) to represent them.

Bernardo, who at 11 years old was outspoken, and had some challenges to memorize spelling (but not lexicon) and grammar conventions such as punctuation, clearly stood out as a class leader who spoke in favor of the other students when necessary, who would talk to teachers when something was not going well for the class, who presented in school videos and at student conferences. He had a great memory for facts and was already a great public speaker.

During my first week of fieldwork research, I had already decided to interview him, but he lost the first consent form. I had to bring another document for him and wait one more week to receive it signed by one of his parents. One of the consciousness-raising moments that most inspired me was during an interview with Bernardo, asking about his impressions on Martinelli's presentation at the Milani-inspired School.

Bernardo: (...) era venuto Edoardo Martinelli che era un suo alunno quando lui (D. Milani) era stato confinato a Barbiana dalla Chiesa perché era con delle idee molto diverse da alcuni, era un suo alunno e c'era questa scuola di Barbiana... loro avevano addirittura una piscina e quando tu facevi una cosa bene, una cosa che ha colpito molto, che ha colpito tutti noi, non ti davano... cioè, c'era un bambino della nostra scuola che aveva chiesto "e... ma se voi faceste una cosa bene vi premiavano?" E Martinelli ha risposto di no perché il premio era fare la cosa, essere a scuola. Questo ha colpito molti di noi.

Translation:

Bernardo: (...) Edoardo Martinelli was here at school and he was a student when he (Milani) had been confined to Barbiana by the Church because he had very different ideas from some of them. He was a student and there was this School of Barbiana ... they even had a pool and when you did one thing well, one thing that impressed me a lot, that impressed us all, they did not give you ... I mean there was one of our students who asked "and ... but if you did something well, did they reward you?" And Martinelli said 'no' because the prize was doing the thing, being at school. This has affected a lot of us.

Simone: I remember. He also affected me. Do you see it like that? Is the school a privilege?

Simone: Io mi ricordo. Ha colpito anche me. Tu la vedi così? La scuola è un privilegio? Bernardo: La scuola è un privilegio sempre. Perché poi molte volte l'alternativa della scuola non è giocare alla play station o non fare niente e stare a casa. L'alternativa è lavorare e molte volte nel mondo c'è molta gente che non ci va a scuola e deve lavorare.

Bernardo: School is always a privilege. Because then many times the alternative to school is not to play with play station or do nothing and stay at home. The alternative is to work and many times in the world there are many people who do not go to school and have to work.

Bernardo shows here his understanding of the difficulties of the Italian students and the time in their search for and their fight for a place in society as protagonists, through education (Mayo, 2007; Streck, 2008) and he makes the association with the reality of having the privilege of going to school today instead of playing video games or staying at home.

Through the memories of a former Milani student, Bernardo examines the significance of some cultural models that can be made from images, stories, principles, and metaphors that are considered normal or typical by a given group in a given situation but not for another group, and finally he connects them to the Discourse with capital D.

When recollecting meaningful words and actions from a meaningful discourse, the students are creating and engaging their ideologies. The students understand marginalized peoples' situation, unfairness with certain classes, lack of action to maintain public spaces (schools, parks, etc.), their own privileged or unprivileged situation, and their ability to speak out against what is not considered a fair situation for the collective.

Learning Evenings

One of the more difficult moments while at the Freire-inspired School was obtaining permission to observe the evening shift, when the adults' school is open. The

pedagogical coordinator, Nelise, recommended to also observe some of their classes to see the greater proximity with Freire's methodology. Two of the main teachers preferred to not have anyone observing them; a third teacher, Zanna, who works part-time in the program, was the only one to agree with my presence after the evening principal requested it on my behalf.

As mentioned earlier, the evening program's name is *Educação para Jovens e Adultos* (EJA) or, in English, Education for Young People and Adults (see Chapter 3 for more on EJA). Only three of the nearly 20 students of the program accepted to sign the consent form to talk to me about their stories.

The only two classes have mixed levels, but every other week, the ones who are learning how to read and write go to a special project class with professor Zanna. She also replaces the other two teachers twice a week, to give each of them a break to plan classes. During one of my evenings observing Zanna's classes, I noted that one of them was a mother who would go to school with her two children. The issue of having in common this convivial and learning environment brings more interest in the learning process. Gadotti explains the notion of conviviality as important in the sense of creating spaces to exchange of knowledge that can be elaborated to serve the familial nucleus that can also not be restricted only to the school setting.

In the following extract, Zanna explains her method of adult literacy. She is beginning to teach a new class at the Freire-inspired School. These meetings are only with the group of students who are learning to read and write. They are five middle age

women. One of them tells in class how glad she is for soon not to have to ask people anymore about the name of a place or a number written in the bus.

Zanna - No primeiro dia, procurei com os nomes para quebrar também o gelo (...) escrevia a sequência para não errar os nomes. Eles ficam muito chateados se esquecemos eles. (...) Então como eu sei um pouco delas, vou tentar fazer como Paulo Freire, eu sou super apaixonada pelo Paulo Freire, pelo método dele, então assim eu vou procurar no dia a dia deles, palavras deles, de treze a vinte e três e desse universo de palavras nós vamos retendo novas palavras. Exemplo: Mala, se eu boto na frente outro pedacinho eu troco a vogal, vira para mola. (...) É muito importante. Não adianta você querer acelerar um processo, você deve ir gradativamente e outra coisa, palavra do cotidiano deles, porque eles vão se interessar. Você dá uma palavra que não tem nada a ver com o contexto, eles não vão se interessar. Aí você dá a palavra e você trabalha algum texto daquela palavra ou se você não tiver um texto pronto, você procura puxar deles algumas coisas que eles conversam e você vai jogando aquela palavra no quadro, aí daqui a umas três semanas, se Deus quiser, então eu tenho certeza que vai ser muito rápido. Você viu aquela menina mesmo, não foi? (...) Elas estavam indo bem rápido. Você sabe, começaram lendo assim. (...) Mas aí você começa a juntar e trabalhar as palavras. Aí você vai fazer um texto, entendeu? Você vai dizer sítio, árvore, estrada, frutas e aí depois você pega os padrões silábicos mais difíceis.

Simone: - Você já vem mostrando a diferença de filo e filho, para mostrar o fonema.

Zanna: Aí vão dizer que é muito cedo, não, não é muito cedo. Eles pegam todas as

Zanna: On the first day, I searched with the names to break the ice too ... I wrote in sequence, so I did not get the names wrong. They get very upset if we forget their names. (...) So since I know a little about them, I'll try to do as Paulo Freire, I really love Paulo Freire, his method, so I'll look in their daily lives, words from them, from thirteen to twenty-three and from that universe of words we start retaining new words. Example: "mala" ["suitcase" in Portuguese] - if I put a little piece in front of it, I change the vowel, and it turns to "mola" ["spring" in Portuguese]. (...) It's very important. It's no use wanting to speed up a process, you should go gradually, and also, words from their daily lives, because they will be interested. If you give a word that has nothing to do with the context, they will not be interested. Then you give the word and you work with a text for that word or if you do not have a text ready, you try to pull from them some things they talk about and you're going to put that word on the board, in about three weeks, God willing, so I'm sure it will be very fast. You saw that girl, right? (...) They were going very fast. You know, they started reading like that. (...) But then you start to gather and work the words. Then you will make a text, you see? You'll say farm, tree, road, fruit, and then afterward you pick up the hardest syllabic patterns.

Simone: You have already shown the difference of ["filo" and "filho" in Portuguese], to show the phoneme.

Zanna: Then they'll say it's too early, no, it's not too early. They pick up all the words fast;

palavras rápido depois que pegarem todas as palavras vai fechar o texto. Ai depois desse começa o que é coesão e coerência, que a coerência vem mais rápido que a coesão (...) tem que pensar bem, saber pontuação, acentuação, tem que ter cuidado.

after they pick up all the words the text will make sense. Then afterward what begins is cohesion and coherence, because coherence comes faster than cohesion (...) one has to ponder it a lot, know punctuation, diacritic marks, you have to be careful.

The concepts of knowledge and power are put side by side here as tools to motivate adult students to learn while engaging them to dialogue and share experiences and awareness of social and political issues that matter to all, and not just to a privileged portion of our society. Zanna very intensely embraces the ideologies and methods of adult education from Freire's experiences.

In her discourse during the interview and in classroom (from my own interpretation from observations and field notes), Zanna engages in taking all the discourse and power tools to contribute to her students' life: the significance tool from the literacy classes per se; the activities and practice tools in presenting to the students the social changes that language learning will cause in their lives; the identity tool from listening to each student's name and being careful to respect their identity ("they get very upset if we forget their names," as she says); and the relationship building tool when she establishes her connection with the students and their realities (bringing her own personal stories of finishing her studies late in life, for example).

Letícia's Story

Letícia (pseudonym) is another learner who caught my attention during my intensive stay and fieldwork at the Freire-inspired School. She is a student in evening classes, is in her late fifties, has two daughters. During the lesson that I interviewed her,

in the back desks of the classroom, the students were analyzing a famous traditional song from the Northeast of Brazil, the region where they live. Almost by the end of the class, the teacher Zanna allowed the ones who wanted to give me interview to come to the back of the classroom to talk to me. At the moment that I was talking to Letícia de whole class was singing *Asa Branca* which has an English version by David Birne named “In the dark”.

The lyrics of this song have a strong relation with the reality of the students’ lives and also brings some terms respecting the dialect and the discourse register of the interior of this geographic region (but also other places) in Brazil where the Portuguese word *plantação* (crops) is pronounced as *prantação* and the expression *para eu voltar* (for coming come back) is enounced *para mim voltar*. The song talks about the dryness in the northeast and the necessity of migration. Parts of this song relate to migrants’ stories like Letícia’s:

Original version:

*Quando olhei a terra ardendo
Qual a fogueira de São João
Eu perguntei a Deus do céu, ai
Por que tamanha judiação (...)
Que braseiro, que fornalha
Nem um pé de prantação
Por falta d'água perdi meu gado
Morreu de sede meu alazão (...)
Hoje longe, muitas léguas
Numa triste solidão
Espero a chuva cair de novo
Pra mim voltar pro meu sertão (...)*

English version:

When I heard the land was burning
Like the bonfires of São João
I asked God up there in His heaven
What is happening to us now? (...)
What a hellfire, what a furnace,
Not a tree was left alive
And all my cattle, they lay there dying
Even my horse, dear, did not survive (...)
Now I live in this big city,
Such a long, long way away
But when I hear that the rain is falling,
Back to my home I’ll return someday (...)

Only during my transcription, I realized the strength between the parallel of what the student was telling me and what the lyrics of this song say. Very eager to tell me her

story, after signing the consent form, Letícia volunteer to give me an interview when Zanna asked who would like to talk to me. Letícia works from home as a seamstress and decided to go back to school despite her husband's criticism and objections.

Letícia: Olha, já faz mais de 30 anos que estou fora da escola. Então quando eu falei em casa: "Ah, eu vou estudar de novo". Aí as minhas filhas, eu tenho duas filhas falou: "ai, mainha, é bom, vai sim!" O pai delas: "não gente dessa idade não aprende mais nada" [Letícia ri]. Só que eu sou dessas que o que ele fala, muitas vezes, eu passo por cima. Eu vou a frente e eu disse: "Não. Já que você não quer, eu vou." Ele disse: "você é quem sabe. Você não vai aprender mais nada mesmo." Eu disse: "pelo menos, eu vou revisar o que eu aprendi no passado."

[Ela estudou até o quarto ano.]

Eu vim para cá para a cidade com 19 anos e aí minha me colocou na escola, mas eu trabalhava muito. Tinha que tomar conta de dez pessoas dentro de casa. Tinha que lavar, passar e cozinhar e para ir para a escola de noite. Eu ia para a escola para dormir.

[A música termina.]

Aí, me deu uma cabeça assim simplesmente que eu não queria mais estudar. Saí da escola e me casei, pensando eu que o casamento era a única solução da vida. Mas não é não. (...) Eu não tenho quase tempo de ler, entendeu? Eu trabalho em casa, costurando que é para ajudar dentro de casa. Faço uns consertos, faço umas costurinhas. Dos vizinhos mesmo. Aí eu vou fazendo. Aí não dá. Hoje quando chegar em casa já vou "abainhar" (fazer bainha) em dez fraldas que me pediram para abainhar. Aí já deixo o livro um pouquinho,

Translation:

Letícia: Look, I've been out of school for over 30 years. So, when I said at home, "Oh, I'm going to study again," then my daughters -- I have two daughters -- said, "ay, mommy, it's good, yes, you should go!" Their father: "No, people that age cannot learn anything" [Letícia laughs]. Except I am one of these people who whatever he says, I often ignore. [But this time] I went ahead, and I said: "No way. Since you don't want it, I'll go." He said: "You know best. You won't learn anything anyway." I said: "At least I'll review what I've learned in the past."

[She had studied until the fourth year.]

I came here to the city when I was 19 and then my mother put me in school, but I worked hard. I had to take care of ten people in the house. I had to wash, iron, and cook and go to school at night. I was going to school just to sleep.

[The song ends.]

Oh, I decided suddenly that I simply didn't want to study anymore. I left school and got married, thinking that marriage was the only solution in life. But it is not. (...) I barely have time to read, you see? I work at home, sewing to help [financially] at home. I make some repairs, I sew for neighbors. I keep at it. Then it's not possible [to read]. Today when I get home, I'll hem ten diapers that someone asked me to hem. So, then I

né? Aí amanhã de manhã pego pelos menos uns vinte minutos, aí de repente me dá um friozinho... sabe quando você está lendo e de repente te dá aquela agonia? Deixo para lá e na hora não consigo mais não.

Simone: Você faz o que pode e eu estou tão orgulhosa da tua história.

Letícia: Se fosse falar tudo um dia não dá, visse menina?

Simone: Tem que continuar. O importante é que você é uma mulher corajosa que não se deixou desencorajar pelas palavras do marido.

Letícia: “Você não vai,” ele falou você não vai porque pessoa da sua idade (da minha idade) não aprende mais nada. Aí eu disse “como é a história. Mas o que??? Eu vou e você não vai me impedir.”

ignore the book a bit, you know? Then tomorrow morning I'll read at least twenty minutes, then suddenly I'll get a little chill ... you know when you're reading and suddenly you feel uncomfortable? I'll stop there and at the time I can't do it anymore.

Simone: You do what you can and I'm so proud of your story.

Letícia: If I were to tell you everything, one day wouldn't be enough, you see, girl?

Simone: You have to continue. The important thing is that you are a brave woman who hasn't been discouraged by your husband's words.

Letícia: “You won't go,” he said, “you won't go because people your age (my age) can't learn anything more.” Then I said, “What's that story? What??? I'll go, and you will not stop me.”

The assumptions about learning, age, gender, well, and formal schooling are all present in Letícia's narrative of her willingness to study despite all the adversity in life. How can she find a good time to read, to learn, to go back to school? The consciousness of the importance of learning as a reaction to any aggression by a dominant power is already present in Letícia. When she recounts to me her reaction opposing her husband and all life's struggles that could have prevented her to going to school, she also tells me how proud she is to have “hung in there” instead of giving up.

Almost 30 years later and the struggles are still the same for many people in the region when Freire started his adult literacy program, but also in other regions and countries. Letícia reports and reflects on all the objections that are presented to her to,

once more, give up on going to school: the husband's criticism, the necessity of working, the lack of time for reading.

The school then becomes a space where liberation happens for people like Letícia and her story illustrates that the school assumes the role of a pedagogical-politic emancipation project on many levels. It is at school where she can show that she has power and control of her life. Even if reading and writing is still difficult, she has been trying as much as she can and telling me and other women her story and about her efforts to be there.

I draw this idea from the notion of citizen school by Azevedo's (2007) which reflects on the conception of emancipation. In this citizen view of the school there are two opposite poles. The first is the mercantilist view of the *mercoshool* where *merco* stands for the neoliberal mercantilist idea of schooling. In reaction, the second pole is about being part of a pedagogic movement and anti-hegemonic system that claims political, social, economic and cultural democratic emancipation.

Instead of attempting an authentic transformation of the structures that dehumanize them, adult learners, as Freire (1985, p. 49) reflects in *Politics of Education*, can no longer live marginalized by society, and act in conscious, or even unconscious ways to oppose the dominant system and those who treat her or him as worthless. It is in that moment that the process of literacy is acting in a critical way and the learner makes the connection with understanding the world while reading it, a theme that I develop in the following section.

Reading the World

On my second day visiting the Paulo Freire-inspired School, while waiting in the teachers' lounge for the daily routine before going to the classroom, Mary, the fourth-grade teacher, asks me if I had decided to stay with her classroom. I had the option to move to one of Lea's classes, a fifth-grade group in the morning or another fifth-grade in the afternoon. I explain that I have decided to observe the fifth grade in the afternoons and the fourth grade (Mary's class) in the mornings. Mary seems content. She smiles. We walk to the small school patio to lead the children to the classroom, and they too are happy with my choice to keep observing their morning class.

The welcome I receive on the first day in their class and the sweetness of the students – they were very calm and lovely in this classroom – helps in my decision to stay there. Nevertheless, I was also interested in Mary's almost daily "reflexive moments" that I noticed. Those are moments in which she stops teaching the content to talk about some life important issue or give some motivational speech to the students. For me they are the moments that she is helping them to read the world. Of course, I also think about performance staging due to my presence in the classroom. I mention it to the pedagogical coordinator, Nelise, who says that it is not performance; she believes that Mary does it due her training in psych-pedagogy.

The students' low socio-economic standard of living is another factor that makes teachers like Mary emphasize motivational speeches. Dropping out of school is an easy solution for most students due to the need of financial help in their family and the common practice of child labor in Brazil.

One of my favorite motivational speeches happens after Mary returns the science mid-semester exams and some grades were very low. She asks them not to be sad about it, not to lose their hope, but to reflect on how to do better next time. She gives one example of a wrong answer that was chosen by many students. The question was “what is the heart’s function?” and many answered, “to love,” instead of describing its purpose as a body organ. She smiles and says it is a very poetic way of answering, but not the best option for a science exam. The students and I laugh about it. She also tells them to take this moment as a life lesson and to take more time pondering before deciding what is right or wrong.

The reflective moments with the students are about many motivational topics, such as not giving up on studying because that can help to improve their lives, not getting upset with a low grade, knowing the advantages and disadvantages of cell phones and WhatsApp (a phone messaging service that is very popular in Brazil), avoiding to lose hope, and learning to reflect and how to do something better next time. Once Mary told them about her own school failures because of her bad grades in mathematics when she was in the middle school; she focused on how it made her stronger and how she did not give up on her studies.

On my second day, she asks the students to tell me about the “magic word” that they use every day to make sure that they always do better. The word is *querer*, which means “to want.” The point is to help them believe that they can change their lives, Mary explains to me later. She keeps also some motivational posters on the wall that say:

Translation:

Eu preciso saber:

I need to know

(Under a thumb up sign)

(Under a thumb up sign)

Agradecer

To be grateful

Amar

To love

Elogiar

To praise

(Under a thumb down sign)

(Under a thumb down sign)

Reclamar

To complain

Odiar

To hate

Criticar

To criticize

The signs do not say that the students cannot complain, hate, or criticize. To the contrary, Mary said that she wishes she would hear students expressing their opinions more often, criticizing, complaining, or hating an idea or concept discussed in class. She said that it does not happen often, and that students still tend to accept very passively everything that is taught to them.

Mary has been teaching in the fourth grade for more than five years. She said she admires Paulo Freire. Her husband is a history teacher in a public school also, but he works with adults' education in a different town. Both of them are progressives and very connected to critical literacy issues and Freirean ideas of consciousness. On the first day of observations, Mary was starting a literacy unit on writing notes, letters, e-mails, and invitations and the different registers of language. During the break, I asked her in which ways Freire inspired her work. Mary mentioned that it happens especially when she teaches Portuguese; she likes to emphasize the origin of the words, the good use of grammar, diacritic marks, punctuation. She recognizes that she is rigid with Portuguese language instruction, but she says that she likes being clear and direct about teaching grammar and she complains that the text books elicit deductive approaches for teaching

grammatical concepts. She also had some complaints about the books and common exams from first to third grade of municipal schools, which use a lot of comics and poems as more simplified way of teaching literacy. She dislikes this and would prefer if they started fourth grade already with the habit of reading longer and more complex texts.

Mary also keeps a significant stack of children's books in her closet. Reading is part of her class activities and I noticed that the students really enjoy it; they also love going to the library. The school librarian is an adorable story teller. I had the opportunity of going to the library with them once and I was also delighted by her way of telling stories.

On one of the days that the fourth-grade class was working on the unit about writing different forms of notes and letters, the main activity was creating a card for fathers' day, which is in August in Brazil. The students received colorful papers to cut in the shape of a shirt to decorate the outside and to write the message on the inside. Mary had not yet finished explaining the activity and one of the students, Caetano, asked, "What should we do if we don't have a father?" I was expecting some question like this and I am sure Mary was as well. Her answer was that it does not need to be a card for a father, but rather for anyone important in their life, who can receive the card and be celebrated on that day. She said it could be a male or a female. one of the students did just this and asked me to help him to be sure that it was all correct.

The context was also about the different register of the language for writing letters, cards, notes, emails, in sum, formal and informal texts. Caetano did not have grammar mistakes in his writing and the note in the card was very clear. I did not mention

anything about the content, but the expectation that maybe his uncle did not like him made me very sad. Mary knows his personal story, like she knows the story of all her students, and she mentioned to me that Caetano does not have a father and has lived with his uncle since his mother married and went to live in another house with her husband. Mary meets individually with parents and she administers a WhatsApp group with them, which means that the parents also contact her by individual messages and by phone sometimes.

Caetano's card was:

Oi, tio (nome). Vamos lá. Não sou muito bom de escrever, mas tudo bem e sei que você não é meu pai, mas eu considero você como meu pai. Tudo bem se você não gosta de mim, mas beleza. Então vou parar por aqui. Feliz Dias dos Pais. Te amo.

Hi, uncle [name]. Let's do it. I am not very good at writing, but that's fine, and I know you are not my father, but I consider you to be my father. It's okay if you do not like me, but that's fine. So, I will stop here. Happy Father's Day. I love you.

My reflections on the Freire-inspired School are also connected to feelings of kindness, comfort, and constant encouraging and words of hope. The public schools in Brazil have the stigma as places where students do not learn and do not respect teachers, and where everything is nearly chaos, and this is not a fair statement. My period at this elementary school in the northeastern Brazil showed otherwise. The spirit of resistance and resilience among the administrators, coordinators, and teachers is always present, and that is the strong point for future schools. These qualities transfer to how the curriculum is presented to students, which is to always encourage students and applying policies with the freedom to adjust and update them to match the students' reality.

The next topic on multimodal classrooms brings some visionary contributions in terms of teaching collectively, combining subjects matters, and using metaphors and myths to create a better sense and use of critical literacy in practical ways.

Increasing Multimodal and Multi-Disciplinary Classes

During my field work in both schools, I noticed a pedagogical approach that recognizes the importance of cross-listing courses to promote more interdisciplinary activities. In Italy, all the instructors talk about this approach as *trasversale*, which can be translated into English as cross-disciplinary method. This practice is fully presented and researched by the group of professors in the Milani-inspired School. In the Freire-inspired School in Brazil, it occurs more spontaneously because it is an elementary school. It happens according to the individual teachers' decision for the unit being studied.

In this section I bring two examples of units in each school that show the work of combining disciplines to discuss ways of interpreting and being in the world. The units that I chose are the ones that I could follow closely and on which I could give my contribution after being there. The examples are on the study of myths and archetypal symbols that, as Frey explains in *Anatomy of Criticism* (1973), contrast our world with the mythical one but also bring aspects more closely related to human experiences.

In both schools, the teachers give more emphasis to content and representation rather than the shape of the stories. The practical part, requested in both schools, concludes the units and is always connected to pictures, sculptures, writings, posters, and other forms of concrete representations that leave something tangible on these

experiences. These lessons' perspective of showing how the way of being and acting in the world has an impact on how students conduct their lives, how to relate to others and to the environment, and, of course, also how to conceptualize teaching and learning.

I relate these approaches to the concepts of multimodality (Jewitt, 2009), ecology, and semiotics of language learning (van Lier, 2013). On analyzing story-telling narratives in her dissertation, Konoeda (2016, p. 22) echoes Kress (2010) and adds that multimodality has two important aspects. First, multimodal texts make meaning across, within, and between modes. Secondly, multimodal theory considers language a multimodal itself because diverse meaning-making resources such as choices of font, paper, position in a sheet, and, in the oral speech, the rhythm, the pitch of the voice, the tone among other features.

Modes are shaped by the daily social interaction and are outcomes of the cultural shaping of making meaning materials: image, writing, layout, music, gesture, speech, moving image, soundtracks are some examples. (Kress, 2014, p. 43). Multimodal approach recognizes all forms of representation that are more than about language and includes image, posture, gesture, gaze, and activities that involve learning through body movements, physical games, singing, and drawing, for example.

The ecology and semiotics perspectives help to understand how the way of being and acting in the world has an impact on how the students conduct their lives, how to relate to others and to the environment, and of course, how to conceive teaching and learning.

The ecological approach, by van Lier (2003), looks at the entire situation and asks about what it is in this environment that makes the process of knowledge happen the way they do and how learning happens. Ecology therefore involves the study of movement, process, and action are happening all the time, in schools, classrooms, at desks and around computers. Most educational research tries to pinpoint the immediate, short-term, tangible effects of instruction, teaching a unit, then testing the students to judge the success of education on the basis of its measurable products. For all practical purposes disseminating the learning process, what van Lier calls “the sowing side of learning tends to be ignored, and the focus is on reaping, or at best on a souped-up crop cycle. If I sow a learning seed on Monday, I want to see a crop by Friday at the latest” (Van Lier, 2003, p. 11). This idea reminds educator that inquiring, being curious, looking for answers, are all steps of process of teaching and learning that takes time.

Along with Gee discourse’s tool kit, four basic organizing constructs of ecology highlighted by van Lier also helped me in the process of observing and analyzing the teaching choices and styles of the focal teachers that I observed in classroom. These constructs are first multimodal aspects of these lessons; second the action that can be understood as the activity based in created to incorporate and making meaning of these lessons; third the relation where the student recognizes the self and the identity; and, finally, the fourth that is quality or combination of all the other elements for a meaningful educational experience across the multi-disciplinary courses that combine one or more disciplines.

As teacher Felice explains in following excerpt, starting with the understanding of the concept of competence as part of the critical literacy knowledge where the person is capable to transfer to any context in life and it is not about the development of trained skills.

Felice: [A]desso, gli obiettivi della scuola sono queste competenze. Non tanto conoscere la storia o conoscere la geografia, ma sapere analizzare la storia per fare qualcos'altro quindi un riferimento al fare. (...) Don Milani, sempre in maniera intuitiva, la coltivava. (...) La scuola italiana è molto antiquata. E questa divisione così netta tra le discipline è un retaggio antiquato che adesso in qualche modo dovrebbe essere superato ma si fa fatica. Noi cerchiamo di fare dialogare le discipline perché pensare di superarle per ora non è possibile. La scuola ancora è rigidamente impostata così. Però già farle comunicare è un tentativo di andare in questa direzione.

Translation:

Felice: [N]ow the school's goals are these competencies. It is not only about knowing history or geography, but to know how to analyze the history to do something different so it is a reference for doing something. (...) Don Milani, always in an intuitive way, used to cultivate this idea. (...) The Italian school is too archaic. And this sharp division in disciplines is an antique tradition that should be overcome but it is hard to fight against it. We try to promote a dialogue among the disciplines because to think about overcome them is not possible. The school is still rigidly imposed in this way. Nevertheless, to make the disciplines communicate is already an attempt in that direction.

At the Milani-inspired School, the interdisciplinary courses are the most appreciated academic aspects for the 20 students I interviewed. The coordinators and instructors take great pride in in their laboratories and I noticed that these multidisciplinary classes (laboratories) keep the whole staff more attuned to the school's big picture instead of isolating themselves in their own disciplines. The interdisciplinary courses are called laboratories and two disciplines are combined in each one. The laboratories for the higher levels combine English and Science, and Darwin evolutionary theories are studied in their original version.

My focal classroom in the Italian school, a middle school first grade class (fifth grade in the United States), had the following laboratories or interdisciplinary courses: Technical-Scientific (Statistics and Geography), Expression Laboratory (Art or Music and Italian), Education on Patrimony (History and Art), and Technology (Mathematics and Geometry).

In the following paragraphs, I will describe examples of units in both countries that bring relevant aspects of combining disciplines to better understand the world.

Representing Myths

I will describe here a three-weeks activity that was developed during the Expressive Laboratory with teachers Felice and Alvaro, Italian and Art teachers. During my period at the Milani-inspired School, the class was working the unit on mythology with the students and they developed a very interesting and special project on the notion of metamorphosis that included reading part of Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis* and inspiring creative activities, such as compositions combined with art work and language translation (from Italian into all the languages spoken by students in the classroom).

The myth unit, as explained in the school website where all the laboratory units are available, had the goal of developing, through the original relationship with the places of conservation of the artistic heritage, a personal and creative knowledge of museum spaces, generally lived passively. The goal was also to learn how to transfer verbal language to graphic language.

The interaction of different languages (physical, artistic and poetic) is activated in evocative alternative contexts to classrooms. These places can be museums, parks, and

natural environments. Outside activities are a very distinctive point of this school.

Whenever possible, the teachers create activities that use, for example, the public park that surrounds the building, or the park with the view of the city a few steps away from there. Part of the discussion of this unit was a reading of the myth of Apollo and Arachne after a hike to a hill in a beautiful open area near a small village two hours away from the school.

This unit started with the discussion and understanding of cosmogony. For that, Felice, the Italian teacher, also had a discussion on myths and legends from different cultures. The unit discussion started before my arrival at the school. Before my arrival they had already talked about the Russian fable *The Frog Princess*, followed by the reading and discussion of the Greek myth *The Web of Arachne*.

The students had also discussed a passage of Dante's *Divina Commedia* on Ulysses discussing the possible author's choices for sending the Greek Hero to *Inferno*. *When Humankind Became a Monkey*, a Bantu myth from Central Africa, was another reading during the semester. The final part of this unit explored the meaning of metamorphosis and Felice started this section talking about Pinocchio and the many ways that students can find transformation states in nature.

The part of this unit that I followed more closely was the discussion about metamorphosis based on the book *Metamorphosis*. They started by recalling the Greek myth of Daphne and Apollo studied during the fieldtrip a few days earlier. This field trip combined history, art and Italian language. We all took the train together to go to a beautiful small medieval village near the sea. After a hike exploring the history of the

place and enjoying our picnic, we sat down in a beautiful open space at the top of a hill. Art and Italian teachers asked the students to share their impressions on the natural aspects of the place. Some students mentioned the high trees in the way, the open space on the top, the proximity to the sea, and the joy of being in nature and not at school.

The teachers then introduced Italian Gian Lorenzo Bernini's sculpture on the myth of Apollo and Daphne by giving the students a piece of paper to decorate with any kind of nature objects. The students remembered the story that was had been read in class.

The students mention that Daphne's father is able to help her with the God who is trying to control her life. Some students remembered that the father had the shape of a river and was constantly changing and that because he was not a father in flesh and bones, he could not embrace his daughter. They also made analogies with the myth of Arachne, who did not have help from anyone and who was transformed into a spider by the goddess Athena due her envy of Arachne's weaving ability. The students also mention that they understand Daphne's right of refusing to accept Apollo's advances.



Figure 2: Picture of Apollo e Daphne. Worksheet, class on myths

This mythology is about the nymph Daphne sacrificing her body and turning into a tree to avoid the advances of Zeus's son Apollo. Eros (or Cupid) retaliates against Apollo for his mocking by firing a golden arrow, causing Apollo to fall in love with Daphne, who had made a vow to never marry anyone. Eros also fired an arrow that made Daphne hate Apollo. She asked the river god, her father Peneus, to free her from Apollo. Peneus used metamorphosis to turn Daphne into a laurel tree. Apollo, in turn, used his powers to make Daphne's laurel leaves evergreen. For the graphic representation of the image of Daphne and Apollo, along with the trees observed during the hike, the students also analyzed the following sculpture by Gian Lorenzo Bernini, called Apollo and Daphne, that can be find at Villa Borghese in Rome. The source of the first picture is the Galleria Borghese website, the second one is a representation of the worksheet on which the students created their art, not only painting it, but also using elements from nature (leaves, pieces of wood, sand, among any other natural material).

The unit does not finish at the fieldtrip. The segue of this study on myths happens in the same week in classroom with the reading of the *Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka. Many students were already familiar also with parts of Kafka's story because of the visit of an Italian author to the school who mentioned Kafka's work. It is very fascinating to follow the development of this unit. The students understood that the changes were also related to changes in time, especially due to the wars in Europe. The steps combining graphics (photos and drawings) by the art teacher and written oral expressions in more than one language by the Italian teacher are all very well coordinated.

The parts that Felice, the Italian teacher, read in class with the students are the three first pages of Kafka. The version used here was published in 1915 and translated by Ian Johnston, but at the Italian school, the teacher used a version translated to Italian. They read together from the beginning of the book until about page 6: “Gregor, somebody called - it was his mother – ‘it's quarter to seven. Didn't you want to go somewhere?’”

Felice told me later that she had decided to skip just one part on the first pages. The part she did not use was later the inspiration for an incipit (see later in this section) for the students' own composition creations in the final steps of this unit. The second step was to understand what animal Gregor was becoming and the feelings that caused in us, the readers. They knew already it was a *scarafaggio* or cockroach in English because of the meeting with the Italian author who had mentioned Kafka's book.

Then Felice wrote on the board the word metamorphosis and asked how the students understand it, how it is present in nature. Many of the students were still

impressed by Kafka's description and mentioned sensations like disgust, bothersome, abhorrence. With regard to the process of transformation in nature, some students mentioned the butterflies as examples, and someone asked if a process of transformation is always negative or can be positive also. Felice answered that it depends always on the sensation of each person as a result of the transformation.

In the next step, Alvaro, the art teacher, asked the students to think about the animals that they could become. They had to write down the animal on a piece of paper and Alvaro collected every student's paper. He explained that he would look for good and clear images of each selected animal for them. In the next class, they would combine those images with the pictures of their faces, using transparent papers. In the following art class, Alvaro took a picture of the face of each student. On the following day in class, Alvaro brought the pictures of each student printed and also the image of each animal chosen by them. Working with transparent paper, each student combined her or his face with the face of the animal.

Not every animal chosen by the students was related to the cockroach or beetle (depending on the translation) that protagonist Gregor Samsa became in Kafka's tale. Instead, most of them expressed the desire to become cats, lions, tigers, dogs, bears, panda bears, birds, panthers, giraffes, butterflies, mosquitos, and wolves. Some of the examples of tiger, bird, wolf, and cat can be seen below (from students whose parents had signed the consent forms)



Figure 3 by Ellie (a tiger)



Figure 4 by Sognatrice (a s wolf)



Figure 5 by Dan (an owl)



Figure 6 by Leo (a cat)

The following step of this process, during the Italian class, is to write a composition completing the following incipit based on Kafka's story. The composition on their own metamorphosis was a homework for the following Expressive Lab class, one week later. The composition was in Italian, but anyone that was a speaker of another language could also bring a version of the composition translated in that language. As Weinstein (2006) states, the use of personal narratives in reading and writing is

purposeful for giving students an opportunity to discuss various issues central to their lives, while allowing to access the many intricacies of any language.

Translation:

Come tutte le mattine fu la sveglia a strapparmi dal sonno e ad annunciarmi l'inizio di una nuova giornata di scuola. Normalmente mi sarei girato/a su un fianco e avrei continuato a poltrire ancora per qualche minuto prima di alzarmi, ma quella mattina aprii gli occhi e avvertii subito una strana sensazione...

Like every morning, the alarm tore me from sleep and announced the beginning of a new day of school. Normally I would have turned on my side and I continued to lie down for a more few minutes before getting up, but that morning I opened my eyes and immediately felt a strange sensation ...

That option of producing texts in Italian and translate to the heritage language, whenever possible to include as activity in classroom, was a school initiative discussed during an instructors and coordinators plenary that I was also invited to participate. This whole-school meeting was to discuss the future of the Milani-inspired School and also the importance of the middle school in general. In this meeting the teachers created together a document, as a collective school writing, where one of the points that most catch my attention was the importance of plurilingual education where all languages that are resources in class are included. It was part of their concept of interdisciplinary education for appreciating individual formation.

My focus classroom, for example, had 23 students, and nine of them were heritage language speakers, either born in other countries or in Italy from immigrant parents. Some of these countries were Brazil, China, Ecuador, Morocco, Tunisia, Senegal, Croatia, Russia, and England.

One week later, all the students brought their compositions and they were eager to share them with the class. First, Felice, the Italian teacher, wanted to hear about the process of combining their face with the animal during the art class. Then she asked

volunteers to share their stories. Almost all the students wanted to read it out loud. Most of the stories talked about becoming a stranger to their families, but soon loved by them again. Others talked about the freedom of leaving the bedroom and going into the world. A special story for me was of a cat (figure 4) who could realize his dream of not having to follow any rules and being able to live in the local fish market, an important landmark of the city where the school is located.

Among the nine heritage language speakers, eight brought a home language version in addition to the Italian one. The student with the pseudonym Adrian, and whose family speaks English at home, did not bring his second version to class. He explained to the teacher that English is boring and everybody in class is learning it. He said he did not feel exotic and special like his classmates who speak other languages at home.

After listening to his classmates' readings, he approached me and asked if I could help him to also translate his composition into English. I asked Felice about it and she said yes. He and I worked together, and we decided on a summarized version of the initial story. He became the tiger shown in Figure 5. His English was very good, and he could do almost all the translation by himself, but I noticed that adult encouragement was necessary for him in that moment. As Weinstein (2006) states, the use of personal narratives in reading and writing is purposeful for giving students an opportunity to discuss various issues central to their lives, while allowing them to access the many intricacies of any language.

Another student, Beatrice (pseudonym), whose family is from Brazil, also asked the teacher if I could read her version of the composition in Portuguese after she read the one in Italian. Felice said that it would be fine, so I read it. It was an intense and beautiful

multilingual lesson that still brings me tears and joy when I recall that I was there to witness, participate, and enjoy that moment. I confirmed during this very special lesson the strong impact that my identity as a multilingual and multicultural person had in that environment.

Classes like this on myth and metamorphosis bring to the students many aspects about power and power struggle. The decisions of Greek myths are always about more powerful Gods trying to control and overrule the lives of semi-gods or non-divinities, but also about the less powerful deceiving the oppressors and finding solutions to not submit themselves to situations of dominance.

Felice commented on the importance of language combined with interdisciplinary classes and the insertion of the concept of competence-based learning in this context. She mentioned a research project that has been expanding at the Milani-inspired School, which she described as a new model that they have been studying along with cooperative learning methods that she considers an element similar to Milani's style of teaching. She said that it is a model of peer-education that Milani would do in a more intuitive way and that schools now do at a more academic level, with increased structure.

Felice: Infatti, l'uso della lingua è una delle competenze che poi alla fine noi certifichiamo e quindi non è soltanto capire, come dire, un testo letterario. È anche saper leggere una ricetta, bolletta, scrivere una lettera al preside, cioè calarlo nella funzione comunicativa principale. E non solo, perché poi c'è tutto un discorso espressivo che noi teniamo molto in considerazione. E quindi i linguaggi verbali insieme ai linguaggi non verbali come espressioni di sé, vero? Ad esempio, il lavoro di ieri sulla metamorfosi era un po' di quello. Infatti, perché hanno scritto

Translation:

Felice: In fact, language use is one of the competencies that at the end we certify so it is not only about understanding a literature text. It is also about knowing how to read a recipe, a bill, how to write a letter to the school president, to know, that means, how to accommodate the language in a main communicative function. And not only because then there is a whole expressive discourse that we take much in consideration. So, verbal language with nonverbal language is an expression of itself, right? For example, yesterday's work about

queste cose così belle, molto più belle e anche scritte meglio che in altre occasioni. Forse parlare di sé e immaginare qualcosa riferito li aiutano ad essere più dentro alla cosa. Perché erano troppo belle, anche la studentessa A., che è DSA, ha scritto un testo bellissimo, ma anche corretto, con quella cosa della scuola, della libertà. Era bellissimo. Quello mi ha entusiasmato.

metamorphosis was a bit of that. In fact, they wrote all these beautiful things, much more beautiful and also better written than other occasions. Maybe talking about themselves and imagining something in reference has helped them be more into the thing. Because the work was very beautiful. That gave me enthusiasm.

In analyzing and demonstrating her satisfaction with the results of the activities on the theme metamorphosis, Felice also strengthens her belief in the concept of competence-based learning as a more fluid capacity of transferring knowledge to different context. In terms of discourse analysis, the tools that are combined here relate to the understanding of identity not only of the participants as individuals, but at a whole group that identifies with the discourse of language use, but as an important and powerful literacy instrument, in a multidisciplinary way.

The relationships and connection building tools are also in the discourse of the participants who have been established in the group, the context, the environment, their position in the world and in the historical moment, making associations with Milani ideas and disassociating from the archaic and rigid Italian school system. Felice also mentions that the research and practice on multidisciplinary activities has been expanding in the Milani-inspired School and explains that it is as a new model that they have been studying along with cooperative learning methods, all elements that recalls Milani's style of teaching in the School of Barbiana.

Now, analyzing specifically the positive results, in the opinion of Felice, of the metamorphosis activity that combines multidisciplinary, multimodal, and multilingual approaches, the students also explore their identity and their agency. It their wishes of

freedom or/and their families' acceptance or not with their metamorphosis and transformation the students create a discourse on identity and positionality.

First, they reflect on their positionality within the family space and, second, on the social space that is the classroom, where they can expose their identity through their narratives and through their second or third languages. The student-participants in this collective activity use language to recognize their role in different groups. The translation in their heritage language add another layer of showing themselves as multicultural students who are bilingual or multilingual.

In the Milani-inspired School, I could observe some of the Italian classes for immigrants. I participated and volunteered twice in these after school classes for adult immigrants. Multimodalities are also a great resource for these classes. The first lesson that I participated was based on newspapers. The same technique used by Milani in his daily routine of the School of Barbiana. At the time, the Pope was visiting their city, so the paper printed an article showing a map of the city. The instructors did not talk about religious aspect of the visit but used the map as an aid for learning about locations and directions.

At the ending of the lesson, Perla, the instructor and former teacher at the school who was teaching this class, invited me to introduce myself and talk about my Italian-immigrant parents experience in Brazil.

The same impact of my identity as a multicultural and external observer, I could confirm some days later one I was invited to participate of the instructors three hours seminar, after class. It was a meeting to write together a document on the importance of the middle school. Talking to the whole group about my research was also presenting my

identity as multicultural and the same feeling happens in the classes in Brazil on myths, as presented in the following section.

The Freire-inspired School observes and celebrate the Folklore month in August. The Folklore day is the 22nd. The Folklore month and the unit on Brazilian Colonial times happened parallelly in the class where Lea, the 5th grade, teaches. The transition between both topics is made in a creative way and it mixes critical analysis that helped the students to think about what the Brazilian current times and the process of decolonizing the country that still have many traits of this historical time.

All the classrooms at the school were being prepared to celebrate different aspect of this festivity, a relevant topic to teach about Brazilian mythology. Lea starts at the beginning of August this unit talking about the works that would be prepared by groups and she shows some characters that were already on the wall of the classroom: *Uirapuru* (a type of Brazilian bird), *Negrinho do Pastoreio* (an African descendent boy who works in the farms with cattle), *Boto* (type of pink dolphin from the Amazon) and two others worldly known as *Lobisomem* (werewolf), and *Sereia* (mermaid).

In this class, Lea announces that the groups have to research about one of the themes: 1) concept, folkloric holidays, traditional games and toys; 2) legends and popular knowledge like the ones used in the back of Brazilian trucks; 3) proverbs and guessing games; 4) typical food and popular medicine; 5) music, dance, and popular festivals. She decided about formation of each group, five groups with five people, and did a lottery to decide the themes.

She talks about the fact that many popular games are not played anymore because the children are replaced by computer games or the extensive use of WhatsApp and other

forms of social media. Then she also brought very enlightening examples of everyday life sayings that children were able to complete without her or mine help:

1 – *Água mole em pedra dura tanto bate até que.....?* / Soft water in hard stone hits it so much until... [The students complete the sentence:] *fura!* / it makes a hole!

Then Lea asks the meaning and one student answers: “we should never give up on something we want or need.”

2 – Filho de peixe / Fish’s son ... [The students complete the sentence:] *peixinho é* / little fish is!

When Lea asks about the meaning, another student talks about looking like the parents.

3 – *Quem se mistura com porcos...* / Who mixes himself/herself with pigs ... [The students complete the sentence:] ... *farelo come*/ eats bran.

This saying, Lea chooses to explain this “saying” rather than asking the students. Considering the social-economic situation of the school and most of the students, one understands her choice of bringing this specific example to class. She explains that that “saying” addresses the danger of walking with people who do not act correctly in society and if something wrong happens one can also be considered guilt for walking with this person.

The next examples that Lea brings are a type of nursery rhymes which are named *parlendas* in Portuguese. She does the same game of leaving out the last part of the sentence to be complete by the students. The translation in English does not make much sense because the rhyme is not exact.

4 – *Hoje é domingo... pé de cachimbo.* (Today is Sunday, feet of pipe.)

Lea gives a quick explanation about this rhyme, saying that the expression “pé de” is probably a transformation with time of the verb *pede* (ask for). Today is Sunday, so you can ask to smoke a pipe is the probably early meaning.

5 – *Sou pequeninha ... do tamanho de um botão. Carrego papai no bolso e mamãe no coração. Um dia o bolso furou. Papai caiu no chão. Mamãe que é mais querida, ficou no coração.*

The students do not show much enthusiasm about this rhyme, perhaps because of the unequal treatment between mom and father. So, Lea moves quickly to the next topic: guessing games or *adivinhações*. This is like a knock-knock game, but called “o que é / o que é?” (what is it / what is it?) in Portuguese.

6 – *O que é, o que é que nasce grande e morre pequeno? / What is it/ What is it that is born big and dies little? And almost all the students answer: pencil!*

Lea also talks about food and popular remedies. At this point the excitement of the students in giving examples is general. The Northeast of Brazil, the school’s region, is one of the better preserve traditions and has an incredible variety of fruits, vegetables and dishes that are famous in the whole country. The students talk about manioc, corn cake, *acarajé* (dish made with beans flour and shrimp), *pamonha* (dish made with sweet corn), *feijoada* (beans soup with lots of pork meat), *tapioca*, *cocada* (sweet made with coconut). For the popular medicine, the examples were all unknown to me except *boldo* tea. The other ones were *lambedor de genipapo e mastruz com leite*.

When Lea moves to the topic “popular music,” she starts by saying what is not from “our” culture: rap and funk. Then she listed: “*forró, samba, frevo*, yes!” One student shouts another popular Brazilian style, which is “*sertanejo*” (similar to country music).

Then, they talk about the dances and festivals that are related to the music genres: carnival, frevo, Saint John's festivals in July, *caboclinho*, capoeira, religious celebrations, Lady of Conception festival, Lady of Carmo festival, and so many other festivals and celebrations that are popular and familiar to their reality.

Lea also talks to the students about the importance of respecting the rules of the presentation as they respect the rules to live well in society. She starts talking about how it should be a presentation for an audience when the work will be done. With regard to public presentations, Lea talks about not memorizing or reading the content, but understanding it to present in a natural way. She mentions that feeling nervous during a presentation is normal for all of us and used the example of teachers who also occasionally struggle to present to other teachers during training courses for educators, at the center where teachers attend seminars and have access to other resources for professional and research development.

In this moment, she reminds students that they would continue to talk about Folklore by preparing their group presentations in class and made a transition to introduce a topic in history. This transition of topics showed how in tune Lea is with conscientization and critical literacy issues. It is interesting to notice also how everything goes back to discourse and power. Lea starting this unit explaining that this history lesson relates to how the Brazilian culture was designed: so many influences from the native people who were already in the land and other influences from the Portuguese that arrived in what we now colonial period. Before she had any chance to talk about the African people influence, a student asked out loud: "How about the black people, teacher?" The question sounded like a well-deserved protest. How about the black

people, who are was being mentioned at the margins in our history classes? Rogers (2015), in his dissertation on how slavery is told in children's book, remember the words of Black historians who talk about the absence of Black slave's voices from early historiography of slavery and therefore sought to privilege it in research (Yetman, 1984; Rogers 2015). I would add in many classrooms also, so it is up to the teachers to make this history alive.

This history class developed as an explication on the three main periods in which Brazilian History is studied: Colony, Empire and Republic. This lesson was amazing for the amount of critical literacy content. I have never had in elementary or middle school a lesson who would give a perspective from the colonized and it was exactly what Lea did. I do not think my presence, in this case, influenced her talk. She started mentioning how the Europeans – Portuguese, then French and Dutch mainly - had a great interest in come here to take way our resources, first exchanging objects with the native people and giving them things without any real value. Lea follows the history book order of facts but tells the story with her own interpretation. The students are fascinated by the way she tells the story and all of them are paying attention.

This pre-introduction was to arrive at the main point of this unit: the division of the coast of Brazil in 15 districts (named *capitanias hereditarias* in Portuguese). She explains that only two among 15 where able to develop. A student asks why, and she tells that it was because only those two invested in creating condition for live while the other ones only wanted to exploit the resources. She adds that Portuguese and Spanish navigators wanted only the profit from the lands where they arrived.

Lea emphasizes the injustice of an incessant demand of paying taxes to Portugal. It would happen (the payment) without having anything done, as the teacher continues, in exchange to improve the lives of the ones living in the colony and mentions some of the revolutions that happened: the *Inconfidência Mineira*, (protesters from Minas Gerais) and *Conjuração Bahiana* (protesters from Bahia). Lea truly makes the whole class, including myself, to travel in time to understanding what is going on.

She is a great storyteller and she continues explaining that the first revolution had as its main figure a man called *Tiradentes*, whose nickname describes his metaphoric work as a so-called dentist for that time in history. He was a leader among 12 conspirators who were all arrested, but he was hung in a public square in 1792 (he was also quartered, but Lea did not add this part to the story). After this part, the students started doing a written exercise from the book.

This history classes made me look for a quote from Freire, in the book *Education for Critical Consciousness* (2005), where he says that to understand the Brazilian advances and retreats historically -- the significance of declaring new eras like Colony, Empire, Republic, Old State, New State, Dictatorship and others - is necessary to really go back and look at the country's starting point, when it was a “colonial, slavocracy, reflex, anti-democratic society.” The result of it are years and years with no democratic experiences, which represents “a major obstacle to our democratization -- not an insurmountable barrier, but neither [is it] one to be underestimated” (Freire, 2005, p. 19). The critical literacy in reading texts on the Brazilian past as a Portuguese colony can be also used with the intention of emancipating minds. The barriers of democratization are

still a reality but going back to understand history is still an instrumental way to fight the colonial and anti-democratic past and present.

In the following day in class, the class is back to the Folklore theme preparation. All the work is made on a big card board, one for each group, with makers, scissors, glue and many of images from magazines, but also some printed images from websites. These are examples of discourse practice tools in a multimodal activity where artifacts help the students engage in dialogues where metacognition, differentiation, multiple intelligences, and the integration of the arts as tools for learning are observed.

Artistic and creative activities as form of multi-dimensional in any language at any age are helpful approaches in the learning process (Gardner, 2002). This multimodal learning moment is a beautiful festival for my eyes with paper colors and cheerful student talking and making decisions about design, text and presenting together.

I observed a similar group work preparation for a presentation for the history class, during professor Pamela's class. The themes were related to transformations from the feudal to the mercantile society, but the biggest difference was that the students worked on power points in the computer lab of the school and the environment was less cheerful. Each student had their own computer to do the research and then transfer the data to the group. The goal for the presentations in both schools were the same: public speech easiness, use of a good lexicon, attention to the content, peer work.

The students in Brazil did not have access to screens or websites so the level of concentration in the work seemed bigger from what I could observe. In Italy, I could see the students getting distract by opening other websites not related with the themes that

they were researching. Another difference was that the day of the presentations, in Italy, the internet was not working, and we had to wait until the next History class for doing it.

Lea and I walk around the classroom to assist the students. It was an amazing experience see their excitement in doing a work together and sharing with me what they had found on popular sayings, games and all material for the research.

While they were still working in groups, Lea wanted to show me the online diary, it is a kind of online curriculum and suggestions of working with other multimodal elements, but unrealistic because most of the activities requires the use of technologies that the schools do not have yet. Lea had already mentioned it to me during one of our conversations outside the classroom. In her discourse, she shows me the frustration about how much the large number of requirements of activities compilations can limit the creativity and spontaneity of a teacher. It brings the lesson plans already to be used with many impracticable options of material use: photo camera, notebook, iPad, projector, smartphone. All that material does not exist in classroom neither at school.

Raising Consciousness and Citizenship Awareness

Freire (2005) defended the perception that one of the basic concerns of education has to be the dissemination of the “prize of conscience” which means human beings face to face with the concrete world and in relationship with other, not in isolation. That brings to conscientization. “If the prize of conscience goes beyond the mere apprehension of the presence of a fact, and places it critically in the system of relationships within the totality in which it exists, it transcends itself, deepens, and becomes conscientization” (Freire, 2005, p 132).

The prize of conscience raising is the most relevant theme in the project of crossing Freirean and Milanian philosophies because of the understanding of the ideal of acting together to bring good for the collective. Forming citizens capable to see their value in society is the best way of combating oppression and historical rooted relations of power by working on critical literacy and by building cooperative works where the knowledge is present. That is the comprehensive interpretation of both educators' common view by all the participants in this research.

The concept of *dodiscência*, a word coined by Freire that means the art of teaching and learning interchangeable actions, was interestingly very present in the Milani-inspired School and less in the Freire-inspired School. Following this paragraph, I bring two examples from my conversations with two focal participants – Pamela in Italy and Mary in Brazil – that represent, in my opinion, the understanding of raising consciousness and the spirit of understanding that knowledge is a tool that must be used in the benefit of the community.

Pamela: Studiamo tantissimo sulla collaborazione tra gli alunni, ma anche tra gli insegnanti. Veramente tante cose noi le facciamo in team e in genere è quello che quelli che vengono da fuori dopo un po' che lavorano qua dentro accolgono come cosa più particolare rispetto a altri posti. Un'altra cosa che noi facciamo molto rispetto a Don Milani è costruire la conoscenza un po' tutti insieme. Noi facciamo abbastanza spesso testi anche collettivi e facciamo anche spesso lavoro cooperativo. Poi molto spesso gli alunni della [nostra scuola] li ritrovi più impegnati di altri... non lo so ... nelle cose studentesche, in politica.... Cioè... un po' ci si aiuta in un certo senso, ma non nel modo negativo nel senso di avere questo cosa di vantaggio, ma nel senso

Translation:

Pamela: We study a lot about the collaboration between the students, but also among the teachers. Actually, we do many things as a team and it is generally what those who come from outside after a while being here notice as something different than other places. Another thing we do much compared to Don Milani is to build knowledge a little all of us together. We often write collective texts too, and we often do cooperative work too. Then very often you notice that the students of [our school] can be busier than others ... I don't know ... in student right movements, in politics That is ... a little one help each other in a sense, but not in the negative way or in the sense of taking advantage, but in the sense that ... I

che ... non so... tu vai a fare volontariato e ti trovi qualcuno che comunque c'entra con la [nostra scuola] perché un po' lo spirito è quello. Un certo spirito comunitario sicuramente.

don't know ... you go to a volunteer work and you find someone who has something to do with [our school] because the spirit is a little bit that. A certain community spirit definitely.

On analyzing how critical consciousness is performed and interpreted by nine educators, McDonough (2014) draws on Judith Butler (2006) theory of performativity which is pertinent to any identity formation that happens through discourse and actions. For understanding critical consciousness performativity, McDonough suggests that it is not a psychological state or a cognitive ability, but instead it is part of an identity performance.

By conceptualizing critical consciousness as performative, she emphasizes the collective, always-in-formations aspects of critical consciousness and at the same time she de-emphasizes the rational and essentialized versions of critical consciousness that can be present in the research literature. She is saying that is more an embodied experience and a performative interaction. Unpacking the concept of performative, building on Butler (1998), I understand neither the bodies are not scripted passively with cultural codes nor performers are anterior of cultural conventions, so each of us interpreter within the limitations of pre-existing directives.

Mary: Eu até pergunto todos os dias na sala, né? Até para quando você se levanta, você não escolhe a cueca que vai vestir a meia que quer vestir, não é? São pequenas escolhas que a gente faz e que à medida que você vai amadurecendo, você vai aprendendo a fazer as escolhas até chegar a ter uma consciência de um cidadão do que é bom para você e o que você pode fazer para melhorar a

Translation:

Mary: I even ask every day in the class, right? Even by the time you get up, you do not pick the underwear you're going to wear the sock you want to wear, do not you? Those are small choices that you make and as you mature you will learn to make choices until you have a citizen's awareness of what is good for you and what you can do to improve society and the environment where you live,

sociedade e o meio em que você vive, não é? Então eu acredito nisso e tenho que esperança que um dia isso mude, né? Porque o que a gente vê hoje são crianças que esperam que você pense por eles e que não têm opinião formada de nada. Da coisa mais simples não têm. Então assim eu fico assim com coração apertado porque você faz o que e diz o que quer e eles aceitam e assim no fundo, no fundo não é isso que a gente quer, não é? No fundo a gente quer que eles digam “não professora, eu não concordo”. Por exemplo, hoje mesmo o Gustavo foi pesquisar sobre Paulo Freire, não é? Pronto, a gente quer isso. A gente quer que o aluno vá buscar, que ele se interesse, que ele vá buscar, que ele tem aquela curiosidade de saber o porquê das coisas, não é? Então é isso que eu gosto de trabalhar em sala de aula. Eu faço muitas explicações e reflexões com eles sobre o que querem ser da vida, o que que eles pensam, como vão mudar a forma que eles vivem, o que querem construir na vida deles, não é? [...] Tanto que você teve uma conversa com eles hoje e você viu um pouco que eles têm opinião formada, mas às vezes ninguém pergunta ou diz que podem dar opinião. Não sabem dessa liberdade e acham que não têm essa liberdade. Acho que o problema do povo brasileiro é esse.

isn't it? So, I believe in it and I have hope that someday it will change, right? Because what we see today are children who expect you to think for them and who have no opinion formed of anything. The simplest thing they do not have. So, I get my heart tight because anyone can do and say anything they want, and they will accept it and, deep inside, that's not what we want, is it? Deep inside, we want them to say, "no teacher, I do not agree". For example, today Gustavo went to research about Paulo Freire, right?

Okay, we want this. We want the student to go get the knowledge, that he be interested, that he goes to get it, that he has that curiosity to know the reason of things, don't we? So that's what I like working in the classroom. I make a lot of explanation and reflection with them about what they want to be in life, what they think, how they will change the way they live, what they want to build in their lives, right?

[...] So much so that you had a conversation with them today and you saw a little that they have formed opinion, but sometimes no one asks or says they can give their opinion. They do not know this freedom and think they do not have that freedom. I think that is the problem of the Brazilian people.

In my first day at the Freire-inspired School in Brazil, the coordinator had to change plans about my morning fieldwork classroom because the first assigned teacher, from the 5th grade, decided to not allow me to observe her. Mary, one of the two 4th grade morning teacher, without hesitation accepted to have me in her classroom for one month. Like Pamela in the Italian school, Mary was the school teacher who more opened up her

classroom, her work, her registrations online to me. The excerpted presented here is part of one of the many conversations/interviews that we have during my time following her.

Mary followed the curricular program, as she showed me since the first day, but she always added a great deal of daily moments of giving motivational speeches for her students, creating dialogues with them, and reinforcing the reading moments, one of the favorite activities of this group of students. In fact, one of the most memorable moments with them was a morning that they spent doing activities at the library – listening to a wonderful local story teller and reading books on their own.

Mary presents and suggests the students to think about resolving existential problems with requires critical literacy combined with the openness of sharing critical personal narratives, counternarratives, testimonies disrupting and disturbing Big D discourse by exposing the complexities and contradictions that exist under official history (Denzin, 2010; Graman, 1999; Giroux, 1987). In classroom, during her daily dialogues “about life topics” she would talk about thinks like her own experience failing in mathematics in seventh grade and the frustration for not studying and questioning more when she was a student. Moments in which the little d (discourse) take place represents a genre that helps to decolonize ideas of power and success.

In this excerpt she mentions two situations that I reported to her that happened during my class observation. Bringing these two occurrences was for this participant what Gee names as activities or practices tool that consider how what she said or allowed to be exposed in classroom (Paulo Freire through my presence) was enacted by her students. The first occurrence was that one of her students one day want to tell me everything he had learned after researching online about Paulo Freire’s life. He

mentioned that after signing the consent form, he wanted to know more about Freire whom he first knew only because of the citations on the walls of the school.

My other focal teacher, Lea, at the fifth grade, along of being a great representative for union and labor rights among her peer instructors, and has an excellent reputation, among parents and other instructors. In more than one occasion, parents and teachers talked to me about Lea making compliments to her style of teaching and making any class argument interesting to her students.

Lea also has her “conscientization moments” in class just like Mary, the morning teacher. I did not register these moments with my recorder, but I wrote detailed field notes while having the awareness that my presence in classroom could have inspired some of the word choices that are directly related to Freire. The willingness of the teachers to create motivational moments like the ones with Mary and this one related here are genuinely interest in giving hope to students.

In Lea’s class, these “consciousness moments” happen less frequently than in Mary class. The example reported here was at the day that she returned the grades from the first semester of school, that goes from February to July in Brazil (I was there in August). Like Mary, she also asks the students to not be sad about low grades and to concentrate in the content and in how doing better the next time.

That knowing to read means to understand what is written and that Brazilians do not read much for laziness and that the habit of book reading is helpful because it is a way of learning more and more. “If you talk to someone who reads and someone who does not read you see the difference from the use of words, from the vocabulary, from the extension of themes and conversations”. And in that day, for my surprise, because I felt

like influencing a bit of her discourse, she said “you all have to leave this room literate, not only knowing basic read and writing skills. It is about reading and understanding what you are reading. It is enough about pushing things away with your bellies. You need to be *letrado* (literate with capacity of understanding what is written), to do your part, to take responsibility. You are able, you have intelligence. Shake your head up and pay attention.” In Portuguese the distinction works a little better than my translation because the first one is *letrado* and the second *alfabetizado*.

In the Milani-inspired School, I learned through my observations, interviews and informal topics with other teachers at the same school that along Pamela, history teacher and coordinator, Felice is the teacher that more keeps Milani’s ideas and concepts in her mind, style and way of teaching. She explained to me that her connection with Milanian ideas comes from a long time ago. She was a student in a school in another big town in the North of Italy that also, since the 1970’s, follows some of Milani’s ideas. She was a student there and her mother was a teacher at the same place.

I had many conversations with Felice during different moments of my time there: lunch times, a day field trip, work pauses, her duty during students’ outside play time, and had more than one opportunity to interview her, along to observing her classes four times a week (Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays) for four weeks. The classes on Wednesdays are in collaboration with Professor Alex, the Art teacher, and it is called *Laboratorio d’Espressione* (Laboratory of Expression). Once we were talking outside the school and two other teachers were leaving and mention to me: “Prof. Felice is the best person to talk to you about Milani, she is like Don Milani in skirt”. The comment was very welcomed by Felice and it confirmed what I have already noticed. I

only regret to make a small correction: Don Milani was a priest who would pretty who dressed his priest vestment, the cloth, which is dress liked, every day even when not conducting a mass.

Like Mary, Felice also had many more moments of “class-talks” than the other teachers that I observed in both schools. In which of these moments she brought citizenship awareness and consciousness issues. During one of our interviews, I asked her the moments that she talks on respecting rules, on being good citizens and about her interest in listening to their opinion while discussing together the important rules before going to a fieldtrip together that would combine a short hike with the history teacher Pamela and with Alex, the art teacher. The trip was an experimental activity to visit some areas and to discuss the characters of the Greek mythology that was the theme of one of the lessons of the Laboratory of Expression.

The common moments on talking about living in society in classroom caught my attention because it reported me to the whole essence of the School of Barbiana. Don Milani valued in a great way the moments of discussion and questions and under his protection all the students would have the opportunity of talking, express opinions and consider themselves part of the society since the cultural diversity with the more socially fortunate could be reduced by the learning and teaching happening at school. Barbiana was a Socratic school where every topic would be open to discussion without hesitations and fear. Don Milani aimed in this way to help his students to become sovereign citizens (*Centro Formazione e Ricerca Don Lorenzo Milani & Scuola di Barbiana*, 2008, pp. 20 and 21). One of the most memorable lesson about citizenship by Don Milan was about when being obedient is not a virtue. Along with his students, he wrote and mad public

two historical letters that are real lessons on the importance of being a conscientious objector. I have not seen any extreme radical type of critical pedagogy methods in this way in class during my period visiting both schools, but I noticed and listened to great moments of discussion with a good amount of time to think about important citizen rights and obligations with the students. Felice gives the following example as her way of discussing in class what means being citizens who care for their community. In the following excerpt, Felice talks about the importance of forming conscious and responsible citizens.

Felice: Certe volte faccio esperimenti. Dico "ma se non pagate il biglietto sull'autobus cosa succede?" E il coro si alza e dice "paghiamo la multa, ci arriva la multa." E io cerco di spiegarli: "no, succede che il servizio perde qualità e quindi poi nessuno più avrà questo servizio." Cioè, per me è molto importante abituarli a pensare... per loro è difficile perché i bambini hanno ancora questi tratti molto autocentrati che si portano dall'infanzia però è importante secondo me menarmela molto sul senso delle regole, magari loro ancora faticano a capirlo coscientemente però cerco di coltivare quest'idea.

Translation:

Felice: Sometimes I do experiments. I say, "but if you do not pay the ticket on the bus what happens?" And the choir gets up and says: "we pay the fine, we get the fine". And I try to explain: "no, it happens that the service loses quality and then no one will have this service anymore." That is, for me it is very important to get them used to think ... that is difficult for them because the children still have these very self-centered traits that lead from childhood, but it is important in my opinion to mentor a lot about the sense of the rules. Perhaps they still struggle to understand it consciously, but I try to cultivate this idea.

In this excerpt, Felice talks on the importance of social rules that she wants the students to understand that must be followed in the benefit of all. I notices that in class she can do it many times to make explicit the logic that a rule has meaning and respect them also has a meaning for living well collectively, and not to avoid a punishment, as society tend to make its citizens to believe: if you do something wrong,

you pay for that, instead of preventing by teaching on the better ways of cohabiting in a place and sharing resources.

Related to this construct made by Felice, there are many elements of Gee's politics tool on how the participant sees the distribution of social goods in the world directly correlated to their connection. Fairclough (1996, 2003) adds that, in fellowship and community all form of social communication or interaction is possible with a common ground. The solidarity among the group (classroom, school) and towards the society depends upon meanings shared and the establishment or maintenance of certain ideological assumptions as commonsensical. On the other hand, the capacity to exercise social power, domination, and hegemony also includes the capacity to shape to some significant degree the nature and content of this common ground, making, as Felice states, the society believe that if one does something wrong just pays back for that. There no thoughts on prevention or on recovering what is lost which makes implicitness and assumptions an important issue with respect to ideology.

In the following chapter, the final one, I will provide concluding remarks on the analytical work in this project an initial stage for further research on more critical philosophies in education. I will talk about the space created here to understand how socially engaged pedagogy of Freire and Milani has informed schools and communities and where we may still might need to go as students and teachers together.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Un'anima non si muta con una parola. Per toccare qualcosa di profondo occorro non anni, ma generazioni.

A soul does not change with one word. Years are not enough in order to touch something deep inside, generations are necessary.

-Milani (1952)

In this chapter, I revisit my findings and discuss their implications for my own teaching. This project brings together Freire's and Milani's philosophies and urges reflection on an international and interpretative pedagogical framework aimed at raising critical consciousness, critical pedagogy, and social justice. Therefore, four main thematic topics emerge from this study. These themes are intrinsically related and are: including all learners; reading the world; increasing the multimodal and multi-disciplinary classroom; raising consciousness and citizenship awareness.

The four themes are expressions of critical literacy and critical pedagogy. The notion of literacy as a powerful tool against poverty and school privileges for some and not for all is the central element in these findings. The literacy then can be understood as a form of action through language to rethink words, texts, and discourses in order to

develop our identities in their world (Comber & Simpson, 2001; Shor, 1999; Freire, 1998, Luke & Freebody, 1997) while critical pedagogy, as the way of learning, being curious, and resisting all together through knowledge creation, transformation and inquiry (Mayo, 2007, Darder, 2002; Freire & Faundez, 1989).

Promoting access to school literacy was the motivation that moved Freire's and Milani's passion for education, school for all, and social justice. It is still the key element for many educators who do not see their learners as empty vases, as Freire (1998) mentioned in many discussions against what he called banking education, the education that only deposits information in the learner's mind ignoring the learner's background, cultural knowledge, and world vision. The multidisciplinary aspect of teaching is expanding in progressive schools worldwide today, as in the example of the Milani-inspired School presented in this study which is a concrete example showing how critical literacy can expand to transversal forms of learning and teaching. Critical literacy also includes the notion of respecting the learners' repertoire, their background, their language, their family traditions, and other cultural practices that they bring to classroom.

Nevertheless, this is still an exploratory study that points to important issues such as the four findings that are in essence four social commitments. Through them, I suggest here the creation of a dialogue among educators in general and about creating conditions for literacy work which provokes more conscious in the classroom, more collaborative work across disciplines, more attention to inclusion, and in summary, creating opportunities in the classroom for students to learn what it means to be critically conscious and responsible citizens.

Conscientização or consciousness is a process created together among learners and educators. The insight that I gained from my study about this construct is that it remains essential, but it also stays tuned with world changes. The essentiality of *conscientização* is connected to the commitment to equality, inclusion, social justice, technology use, environment in both the local community and planet-wide, among other local and globally relevant aspects. The construction of *conscientização* in different groups is an important tool for the inclusion of human beings in a vast dialogue based on the constant re-conceptualization of literacy in a fast-moving digitalized world. This expanded dialogue on consciousness and literacy has to take into consideration the changes that occur in literacy conceptualization not only according to social and pedagogical theories, but also due to technological, economic, work, and media and digitalization developments, and are characteristic of the increasingly complex and globalized societies of the 21st century (Hanneman, 2015, p. 297).

Increasing amounts of information available online and use of digital technologies and social media within critical literacy pedagogy are changing the way human relations happen in society. The access to smartphones, androids, iPads, computers, online classes among other activities and devices, is a point that needs to be expanded on and deeply included in future research, when considering the growing influence of these tools in the classroom environment. In this study, technology use is mentioned but is not a central focus.

Online courses are another education setting, even if virtual, that needs to be discussed in consideration of the topic of critical literacy. The Brazilian government, for

example, has announced that it wants to expand this form of schooling in the near future, but has not presented concrete projects at this point. Eco pedagogy - an educational movement that was initiated by Paulo Freire and has been further developed by Gadotti (2000) and by Gutierrez and Prado (2000) in order to create awareness on respect for our planet - is another form of education that is gaining importance and can be expanded as a relevant topic for this century.

The dialogue in this study focuses on specific situations that are inspired by and/or reinvent the philosophies of Freire and Milani, but it can also inspire other researchers to expand the work by looking for similar philosophies of education in other parts of the world. Although they enacted social justice through their teaching and writing in education during the same historical time, Freire and Milani worked in different social contexts.

The social class level of their students was similar, and not only as remembered Shor during one of our conversations, both educators also took similar democratic and egalitarian ideals to their work. “Freire and Milani wanted their students to emerge as assertive, articulate, informed, empowered civic participants in their societies, which had relegated their students to subordinate status” (Shor, personal correspondence, 2018). And although Freire and Milani developed different techniques of teaching and forms of addressing students which were related to their cultural contexts, they also brought a social justice orientation situated into specific conditions. The same idea works for today educators who want to be inspired by their effort in establishing critical literacy as the

vital point in the education system. Freire's and Milani's critical pedagogies still have the potential to transform today's education systems.

This study reflects also my understanding that Freire's and Milani's practices have been sufficiently theorized, analyzed, and criticized in a scholarly and elitist way. This type of critical literacy scholar debate on both educators often tends to miss issues of race, ethnicity, and class. The predominant presence of children of color in the Freire-inspired School, for example, demonstrates how the class differences in Brazil are strictly connected to race and ethnicity. The colonial past, when colonialists enslaved and also marginalized Black and Indigenous people, has its sequels in our current reality. The difference today is that educators familiarized with critical consciousness and critical literacy, like I witnessed in the Freire-inspired School, are not silent about the atrocities of the past anymore and point to their students the consequences of it and the possibilities of changing it.

My aim as I visited the schools was to understand if these commitments developed primarily in the individual (teacher) or was collectively (school group and policies) enacted through critical teaching. In other words, the social commitments within the school context can lead learners and educators to raise consciousness and become critical citizens of the world. That occurs by being aware of our tools for truly understanding the local context (little p of politics) and reflects how people deploy power in their language use and the global events related to Big P, which signifies power structures locally, regionally, nationally, and/or globally.

An inclusive classroom environment in which each learner's ability is recognized and embraced is a first important lesson in interpreting different forms of experiencing, along of reading, and writing our existence in the world. Remembering that multimodal approaches, that include a myriad of forms of representation such as image, gesture, posture, different ways of representing written and oral work (Kress, 2014), multidisciplinary classes at school are also an expression of how the school system can be reinvented for the time, place, and conditions in which a reinforcement of a democratic pedagogy is necessary.

The many layers of this project were motivated by an interest in showing the complexities and situatedness of working with critical theories and practices of pedagogy. The result may be a hands-on approach for creating conditions to raise critical consciousness and to discover how these concepts are brought to life in various educational settings today.

In connecting the four findings/social commitments, the understanding of power dynamics was a crucial instrument for analyzing the ideas that are not linear and organized but come from different settings and time periods relevant to reconstructing and understanding current events. According to Foucault (1978), power corresponds to a multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere where they operate, and which constitute their own organization. They can form a chain or system and help to support one another or create disjunctions and isolation from each other. Power is everywhere; it emanates from every complex strategical situation. Therefore, discourse is tied to the power dynamics and knowledges that are being produced currently.

Drawing on the genealogy, I extended Freire and Milani's ideologies and their interpretations beyond their many books and letters to include the social, personal, historical reconstructions and interpretations of their ideologies on how language-use positions people (students and educators mostly) in the world.

In this context of creating conditions of consciousness, power dynamics must be understood not only in a binary way, from a dominant elite to the oppressed, for example. The idea of power must be unfolded in a non-binary way in many different spheres and directions in order to understand local political perspectives in school policies alongside larger political manifestations in a more complex context. Power has multiple dimensions, it is fluid, and is something that everyone exercises

In a broader understanding of power relations, Gaventa (2003) adds that Foucault recognizes power as not just a negative, coercive, or repressive entity forcing action against our wishes, but rather as a necessary, productive, and positive force in society. It means that through dynamics of power, people can also better generate social justice locally, by using critical language, starting protests and awareness movements, creating political and social changes, and challenging the idea that there is only a binary type of power relation.

The theoretical tools of power and discourse for my analysis of both educators' work also helped me to address their significance in today's world. This ensemble of theories provided the resources to explore the social event of spoken, unspoken, and late-spoken dialogue that is vital in discussions of literacy and the process of reinterpreting ideas and creating knowledge, since literacy is a political and social practice that goes

beyond linguistic methodologies and ways of knowing (Freire, 1972; Gee, 1996). The theoretical tools of power and discourse were also an important starting point for analyzing the spoken and written discourses that were part of the data for the literature review, methodology, and data collection chapters.

Finding Inspiration for Literature Review and Data Set

As part of my review of literature, I presented an art-based representation inspired by performance ethnography that was fundamental for my process of constructing an epistolary genre as a way of coping with the missed encounters between these two educators. Using the epistolary genre as art is a pedagogical tool that upends rigid structures of thinking, thereby creating an in-betweenness of feelings, and a way to merge art and social science to create something that is not strictly identifiable as either (McDonough, 2014; Kraehe & Brown, 2011; Finley 2005).

Creating a dialogue between Freire and Milani helped me evaluate interactions, values, beliefs, symbols, objects, and places meaningful to their positions on power dynamics, gender relations, and political views. The dialogue through letters as interpretative construction was supported by “recognition.” Gee (2010) sees the concept of recognition as the key approach to Discourses (big D) to capture the agency of authors before looking for contemporary interpretations of their works.

This process also allowed me to weave in their personalities, family relations, word preferences, and probable tone of voice, among other personal aspects, with a multimodal aspect, where all the modes are important to help in the process of construction. All this facilitated my understanding of the ways their thoughts and

philosophies manifest themselves in the people involved in this study, because each discourse carried their story inside the narrative of different interlocutors who have their own stories and interpretations manifested in their own discourses.

During my data collection experience in Brazil and Italy, I felt excited to be an educator “chasing” traces of Freire and Milani in a very intense way, but at the same time, I suffered when I could not find expressions of their work. I had many moments of frustration when I could not see evidence in a clear and direct way. I thought: “Why didn’t I choose a Montessori School, as I planned years ago when considering my interests in Education?” Freire and Milani do not have graphic and descriptive methods that one can follow step by step.

Thanks to my analysis of data, these “chasing frustration” moments gradually became less frequent. I can see indications of both educators’ philosophies here and there in the interviewees’ speeches, in the teaching practices, and the consciousness expressed by learners and educators. My research was centered on a narrow field work selection – only two public schools in two different countries. It focused on the concepts and practices connected to critical consciousness of the educators as well the practical application of these concepts in the classroom, with their peers, and in assemblies (in the Brazilian case). “Chasing Freire and Milani” was the expression that came to my mind many times during these two intense data collection months, but the expression transformed to re/reading Freire and Milani.

I am aware that it will take a long time to expand the knowledge and the strength of a framework combining critical pedagogies in favor of a transformative education.

Nevertheless, in the past four years, I noticed how the positive reception of these ideas combined. I have participated in many forms of gatherings in different languages and different settings to talk about the relevance of critical teaching through Freire's and Milani's lens, and I am hopeful about the possibilities of a critical and transformative teaching-learning approach based on raising consciousness.

I especially took notice of the power of this framework during the fieldwork in the two public schools in Brazil and Italy, where my presentations and informal talks on critical pedagogies and revolutionary practices of teaching always aroused interest and the desire to know more about Freire (in Italy) and Milani (in Brazil).

Finding Inspiration for Teaching Practices

After the long ethnographic case studies research development, I have a better sense of critical literacy as a liberating process in which the individual becomes self-critical with respect to the historically constructed nature of her or his own experience. At that point, he or she also embarks on the practice of "reading" the world and understanding imposed limits in the light of one's possibilities of finding his or her place in a larger society (Giroux, 1987). As examples, the theme of inclusion and adult education in its all forms was a relevant element to take account of in the research process.

Both schools, the Freire-inspired and the Milani-inspired, were engaged in doing more than the expected from school policies, to ensure that all students, with all types of abilities, became members of the community. They also strove to enhance the experience of participation, in both evening (Brazilian program) and after school classes (Italian

language for immigrants) for adults, whose access to formal education had come later in life.

The time I spent talking to students, educators, and promoters of Freire and Milani literacies also constituted an important transformative learning process for myself. I heard from some of my interlocutors that my presence in their classroom helped them, because of our shared interest in liberator pedagogies, as well as my curiosity about, and appreciation for, their work. Conversely, their willingness to share their teaching practices and experiences inspired me to try some ideas in my own class designs and teaching.

The multimodal and multidisciplinary aspect is the clearest example that I can give. I teach two courses that combine Romance Languages, critical pedagogy, linguistics, heritage language, and multiliteracy. One of them is on Community Language Instruction, where, as a Portuguese instructor, I teach in collaboration with an instructor of the Department of Italian of the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Together, we design the classes, we then teach, and we organize practicum experiences for the students in local communities of Italian and Portuguese speakers. In the other experience, at Smith College, the course is on Romance Languages, where I bring awareness among students fluent in four different languages (Portuguese, Italian, French, and Spanish, alongside English) of a critical-consciousness approach.

I can say now that the experiences of researching and searching for Freire's and Milani's ideas in situ encouraged a different slant in my practice, inspiring me to engage more in critical literacies as powerful practices to help students understand ideological

aspects of language. Critical literacies are the tools that can help the learner understand the uses of discourse (Gee's little d) in micro-interactions and social groups, but they also help to create awareness of political nature discourses (Janks' big P) where powerful relations, ideologies, and identities are present across crosslinguistic and transcultural contexts.

As bell hooks states, critical pedagogies of liberation respond to these kinds of standpoints and struggles and embrace all kinds of discussions and experiences as relevant forms of knowing, crucial dimensions of any learning process (1994, p.89). This statement reminds me that even though I sometimes experienced frustration because of the school systems' lack of materials, I also noticed processes that empowered both the students and the teachers.

Contributions from and in Fieldwork

During a meeting of the entire school-body in Italy, called *La Scuola di Mezzo* (*The School in the Middle*), to discuss the role of the middle school, I was invited to talk about my project and my impressions of their school. Sandro (pseudonym), one of the pedagogical coordinators, mentioned the faculty members' appreciation to have outside eyes observe and help them reflect on the work they had been doing, and also on their efforts not to close themselves off from interactions with other schools.

In this meeting, the instructors and coordinators of the school created a text together. It was a collective writing process like the one used in Barbiana. The groups were formed with instructors from different disciplines and tasked with reading, editing,

and updating sections of the document. I participated in the English language section along with the History, Italian, and Mathematics teachers.

I was also invited to share my point of view and my preliminary findings with the whole school. I mentioned that I was there mainly to recognize and acknowledge Don Lorenzo Milani's inspiration underlying their teaching practices.

In Brazil, I attended Union assemblies, as well as informal teachers' meetings, to discuss the decision-making process concerning strikes, where they also spoke of the joy of creating a better future by improving lives through providing the education that gave hope to many. The interest in forming a public institution of teachers to bring more Freirean ideas to the schools is contrary to Brazilian history. In Italy, I reinforced their desire for greater openness and more contact with other schools, just as I emphasized the importance of dedicated research time for teachers throughout the country. The teachers stressed the importance of encouraging other schools to join them in setting aside time for professional development through research and creating an inclusive environment by bringing in experts to share resources and information.

Contributions from Scholars

My "encounter" with Freire's and Milani's ideas also included searching out people who worked with them and were guided by their pedagogies. I wanted them to share their experiences, knowledge, and also their vision for the future. Professor Ira Shor and educator Edoardo Martinelli, who worked closely with Paulo Freire and Lorenzo Milani, respectively, met for the first time in a seminar discussion about Freire and

Milani on language and literacy at the College of Education of the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

From September to November 2018, I also participated in an online course promoted by the *Instituto Paulo Freire* in São Paulo, Brazil, taught by one of one of Freire's former collaborators, Professor Moacir Gadotti. It was an intense experience since that course was taking place during the presidential election in the country. One of the main planks of the right-wing candidate, now the President, was directed against the use of Paulo Freire's philosophies in Brazilian schools.

At that period, Gadotti talked about the risks of limiting teachers' critical literacy skills a limitation that turns the schools' results, and the teachers themselves, into machines that teach to a test that corresponds to dubious marketplace logics. Nevertheless, Gadotti also said that the drive to higher creativity, so characteristic of Brazilian teachers, would never let this happen.

My experience during fieldwork in Brazil leads me to agree with Gadotti. The ideological strength of the teachers and the power of their union indicates, in my opinion, that the new government cannot succeed in implementing a movement named School Without Party, whose goal would be to censor Freire's ideas.

In the following sections I will present relevant parts of interviews and personal conversations with Martinelli and Shor and also with Alex (pseudonym), the vice-principal of one of the Paulo Freire Institutes in Brazil. Alex was also my interlocutor in the process of learning more about the theories and practices, as well as the lives of Freire and Milani.

Martinelli and Shor

“We are Brother in pedagogy, and we fight together.” It was what Martinelli wrote to Ira Shor in December 18, 2018, on a social media post. Shor had shown appreciation for one of Martinelli’s post on the future of education.

This brief exchange made me very happy. They met for the first time in April 2018 in Amherst, invited to talk about Milani and Freire at the UMass Amherst College of Education, an event organized by Dr. Maria José Botelho and me. That was my way of bringing together in the same place two people who have dedicated their lives to promoting critical literacy and keeping alive the legacies of Freire and Milani.

Both shared many beautiful and personal recollections of the moments passed with Freire and Milani. Shor’s son’s name is indeed Paulo in honor of his mentor and friend. During our first lunch altogether, Shor also said to Martinelli that during the 1970s, and together with a group of radical educators, he had read the book written by the students of Barbiana under the supervision of Don Milani, *Lettera a una professoressa* (*Letter to a Teacher*). These people used to meet once a month in Connecticut to discuss critical issues in Education. Regrettably, he had not then showed the book to Freire.

In a personal communication with Shor (June 6, 2018), I mentioned to him that I was amazed that he had read *Letter to a Teacher*. But I was mostly surprised that he had never mentioned the book to Freire, which, even today, leaves me a bit sad. The context in which Shor read this book, as he himself tells it, was as part of a group called The Radical Teacher, to which he belonged during the 1970s. This group put out a journal of

the same name, and its members also attended annually the conference of the Modern Language Association, where members sponsored forums on literature and teaching.

They used to meet every six weeks in Connecticut, conveniently mid-way between New York and Boston, where most of them lived. The group included luminaries such as Richard Ohmann, Louis Kampf, Florence Howe, Adrienne Rich, and Paul Lauter. Some of the younger members urged the group to read a wonderful book of radical teaching from Italy, *Letter to a Teacher*. When I asked Professor Shor why he did not mention this book by Barbiana's students to Freire, he replied that at first, he did not see it as a work of critical literacy or language, but rather as an elementary and middle school text. It was only recently, as he prepared for the meeting in Amherst that he changed his mind:

I bought a copy, read it, loved it, we discussed it, but around 1980 I left this Radical Teacher group. (...) I became involved with the Conference on College Composition and Communication, which is the enormous professional organization of English teachers, and my interest moved dramatically into radical work in language instruction, the debate over First-Year Comp, etc. Because the book [*Letter to a Teacher*] was about lower education, it didn't enter into the discussions and disputes then furiously underway about this enormous enterprise of college English. I reread the book now in preparation to meet Edoardo and speak in Amherst, I now see what was left behind vis a vis how Don Milani's experiment coordinated with Freire's ideology and methods, and especially how *Letter to a Teacher* was a stunning example of the theory of "the third idiom" I proposed in my 1992 book *Empowering Education* (Shor, personal correspondence, 2018).

The opportunities that critical literacy gives of critique and transcendence and mentioning can connect with the theory of the "the third idiom" in which Shor proposes that we can learn from Freire's and Milani's examples without copying them. Shor comments that Freire was emphatic about the idea of that he should be reinvented, not

copied, for the time and place and conditions where teachers are attempting democratic pedagogy. According to Shor, both Freire and Milani dedicated their life and work to answering a question once posed by Freire: “For whom and against whom are you teaching?”

About the meeting with Edoardo Martinelli, Shor says it brought to life the reality and history of Milani and the School of Barbiana. He was moved by his words and the example of his life. I asked Shor to comment on similarities between Freire’s works and the Barbiana experience as he sees it today. He answered that all of us who teach for social justice bring a similar general orientation to our work, although our outlook changes in reaction to specific local conditions.

When I asked Martinelli to reflect on the similar legacies left by Freire and Milani, he mentioned the relevance of, first, understanding the concept of *scholè*, the Greek word σχολή that means leisure, free time, rest to pursue the truth. Martinelli remembers that we lost the capacity to appreciating the slow pace of time, and our minds have ceded possession of the time we experience.

Martinelli sees the roots of today’s problems of literacy in the incapacity to articulate a discourse of simultaneity or sequentiality, which is also to tell the truth in a universe of words. For him, even the word “school” has lost all sense, because it is defined by a single place where time is dictated by the school bell. In this way, good school practices contrast with power and institutions of control.

In my first interview with Martinelli, in 2016, over the phone, when I explained my interest in combining or, at least, mutually relating the pedagogies of Freire and

Milani, his first reaction was to say that Freire's approach was adapted for adults and thus different from that of Milani. Two years later, he reversed himself and said that Freire's and Milani's ideas can be applied to any level in any educational setting.

Martinelli says that we live in a time of global urgency integrate critical literacies into the education system. "Only a pedagogical method with these premises can save the world today. It is not only simply to say that it is good and useful. It is the case of saying that it is urgent because without it we cannot raise citizens able to interpret what democracy means" (interview in May 2018). This is a method, as he continues, that also follows the logical mental schemes of other great philosophers of thought about education like Maria Montessori, Leon Tolsoj, and Jean Piaget.

Martinelli is one of the authors in *Letter to a Teacher*, which he believes is still important to read. He recalls that its contrast with the capitalist world was first well received in France, as it also was in the non-secular and anti-clerical Marxist world of Sartre, with its point of youthful rebellion. By contrast, in Italy, the emphasis was on the figure of the priest and educator Don Milani and less on the students themselves. Martinelli argues that the pedagogical aspect of the School of Barbiana was better understood in France and Spain, where, he claims, when the book was published in 1968, it sold a million copies.

Martinelli and I discussed the risk of elevating Freire and Milani to the rank of mystic figures instead of concentrating on the work and its ideas for adaptation into an educational setting. "As was done with Socrates and Plato, if we stop thinking about readapting their ideas, their critical and radical contribution to education, and just

following them blindly, we kill them”, added Martinelli. It sounds like a contradiction, but Martinelli tries to say that it is important to avoid fantasizing about the figure of both men. In other words, Martinelli is trying to say that their methods were to be applied to the ever-changing concrete realities of their students. As educators, we have to recognize the reality of the teaching-learning environment in which we find ourselves. Martinelli offers a concrete example of one of Milani’s ideas. In both the community schools he created, Milani was against purposelessly allowing the passage of time.

In Barbiana, only swimming (they built a swimming pool) and skiing were allowed, since in Milani’s opinion, these two practices were important for the safety of any human being. Martinelli says that because of premises like this, many people claim that Don Milani was against “play,” which is incorrect. His concern was context, avoiding the pitfall of distraction for those coming from a low cultural and economic context, for whom activities like soccer, ping-pong, and other games might feed their lack of interest in education.

Milani rooted his active pedagogy in reality, from there going on to develop further his own ideas, together with those of his students, in opposition to an oppressive school system. He also spread his ideas in other places and to many people. Don Milani’s genius and invention was the subject of many articles, books, and conversations, and about which, Martinelli commented: the “Priore” (as Don Milani was called by his students and parish members) like to replace his own genius with a collective personality, where the dialog and the relationship within the community was the essential, in which

way, he democratized the act of consciousness that must display solidarity and the spirit of criticism.

More Freirean Connections

Freire's presence is felt everywhere in the Brazilian city I visited, which is where he himself lived for years. At the Freire-inspired School, I learned about a center and school of formation of educators. Here, I refer to it as center/school to keep it anonymous to respect the community privacy. This institution provides courses in pedagogical formation to educators in the public schools and which nearly all the teachers I met and interviewed recommended I visit.

The center/school constantly receives visitors and/or is contacted with requests for research on Paulo Freire's work. I myself was received by the vice-principal, Alex (pseudonym), who gave me a long interview that same day, and invited me to attend the book discussion called Chá Freireano (Freirean Tea Hour) on Pedagogy of Hope, which was scheduled to take place in the month of August; I attended two of the sessions.

The center/school has passed through modifications, which include interest in promoting more studies on consciousness in the school and reflections on praxis, alongside theory, together with defending a Freirean perspective. When I asked whether what was going on was a form of self-critique, Alex answered that he saw it more as a reflection and a reply to all the questions the center/school received from educators throughout Brazil about the Freirean perspective. The urge to engage in self-criticism arose from a feeling among the workers and coordinators at the center/school that they were not taking Freire's legacy sufficiently seriously. They therefore decided to devote

themselves to working more within Freire's perspectives, especially regarding praxis. One of the changes regards dialogues. Alex says that those are processes, which do not need necessarily be peaceful and equal. They can be about different ideas and conceptions, views of the world, education, continued education, their own praxis, the condition of being an educational professional, and personal limitations. All of these, Alex emphasizes, address the human being as a whole.

During the interview, Alex emphasized the necessity of reflecting on the reconstruction of educational practices which he referred to as "denaturalization," defined as the act of not taking as natural and acceptable old practices that have overly solidified. In Alex's opinion, school culture has been constructed historically. It is not so easy to deconstruct some actions that take place in the school, but he believes in the Freire institute of teachers' formation they can bring the prospect of novelty to the teachers. They want to begin these actions with some questions that men and women teachers have raised naturally in the schools. In this way they want to stimulate good practices that they have been repeating in their discussions.

During our conversations, Alex was always very careful about being inclusive and using feminine and masculine forms. He said that gender sensitivity is also part of the auto-reflection about work, including removing the word "perfecting" that was once part of the title of the center/school. Recently, they have become more conscious in their discourse of the use of both genders and not only the masculine which is the more common form in the plural in Portuguese. The decision of removing the word

aperfeiçoamento was a product of realizing that the idea of making someone “perfect” contradicts Freire’s perception that human beings are permanently in a state of formation.

Gender is another important issue for the center/school, even in terms of updating documents legally, in which, as Alex explains, the masculine is always the form used. Impetus for this reexamination comes from the awareness that the center/school not only advances the perspectives, books and ideas of Paulo Freire, it is also a school of formation for educators that combines policies for creating educators with the need to reflect and propose political actions for continuing education among people working in public education.

The center/school was founded in response to requests made by the teachers’ union to improve the status of teachers, but also to acknowledge the continuous development of teachers as a fundamental educator’s right. The center/school aims to offer a unified mode of preparation (formation) for teachers in the public schools. It is, as well, a center of discussion for men and women teachers about the policies of teaching and learning corresponding to the wishes of the municipality, which has been restructured in the recent years.

Implications for Future Research

This study is an initial inquiry into the possible ways of bringing together critical pedagogical approaches. My intention is to visit other places in many countries in order to assemble and register additional transformative learning experiences that are based, inspired, and motivated by liberator pedagogy. I am especially interested in projects

where educators are reacting to a pedagogical technocracy imposed by the directives of repressive governments.

My conclusion is to argue for reflection on global (starting from the local) educational theories and practices through a pluralist, emancipatory and critical pedagogy, which is to serve as a model to inspire a committed, participatory, critical citizenry. Inspiration is always available from the ideas of Freire and his former collaborator Gadotti. To wit, in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1989) suggests guidelines for a carrying on a dialogue in critical pedagogical projects.

The foundation is love, to which are added four fundamentals leading to a successful two-way teaching-learning environment: humility, faith, critical thinking, and hope. Gadotti (2016) calls for inspirational qualities to achieve this aim. In his opinion, these qualities translate into skills for clear communication, out of which flow new ideas; ideas may never be imposed from without. Institutional support from principals and coordinators is also a necessity. So, too, are methods to follow, evaluate, and systematize projects. And, likewise, educators must strive to improve participation and credibility. They must search out theoretical underpinnings and instill commitment to overcome disbelief and discouragement.

Understanding these issues allowed me to expand on what Freire calls *dodiciência*, which is, for me, not only a double path to learning while teaching—and teaching while learning—but a triple path that combines learning, teaching, and research. It also helped confirm what I have learned from both educators: that in a world too often organized to serve the interests of the upper classes, the work of critical literacy is

indispensable for raising consciousness and questioning power dynamics, as well as for creating debates about social justice.

In conclusion, Freire and Milani pedagogies demand reading the world through the lens of critical literacy. This reading is also all-embracing, including scanning the globe using digital technologies as social tools. Critical literacy enacted across disciplines and educational settings, raises consciousness.

I echo here Shor's (personal communication, June 6, 2018) statement that even though we now live in repressive times, where a long-gestating drift to the right has empowered nationalistic and corporate forces, creating difficulties for fostering democratic education, it is absolutely essential that we continue that struggle. To this, I myself add that raising critical consciousness in our schools, communities, and circles of friendship can enable the promotion of freedom and equality for many.

APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL

IRB Approval



University of
Massachusetts Amherst
108 Research Administration
Bldg.
70 Butterfield Terrace
Amherst, MA 01003-9242
Research Compliance

Human Research Protection Office (HRPO)
Telephone: (413) 545-3428
FAX: (413) 577-1728

Certification of Human Subjects Approval

Date: February 24, 2017
Simone Gugliotta, Teacher Educ & Curriculum Stud
Other Investigator: Maria Jose Botelho, Teacher Educ & Curriculum Stud
From: Lynnette Leidy Sievert, Chair, UMASS IRB

Protocol Title: Paulo Freire & Don Milani: A Dialogue on Revolutionary Pedagogical Practices. Protocol
ID: 2016-3179
Review Type: EXEMPT - REVISION
Paragraph ID: 2
Approval Date: 02/24/2017
Expiration Date: 06/29/2019 OGCA H:

This study has been reviewed and approved by the University of Massachusetts Amherst IRB, Federal Wide Assurance # 00003909. Approval is granted with the understanding that investigator(s) are responsible for:

Modifications - All changes to the study (e.g. protocol, recruitment materials, consent form, additional key personnel), must be submitted for approval in e-protocol before instituting the changes. New personnel must have completed CITI training.

Consent forms - A copy of the approved, validated, consent form (with the IRB stamp) must be used to consent each subject. Investigators must retain copies of signed consent documents for six (6) years after close of the grant, or three (3) years if the study is unfunded.

Adverse Event Reporting - Adverse events occurring in the course of the protocol must be reported in e-protocol as soon as possible, but no later than five (5) working days.

Completion Reports - Notify the IRB when your study is complete by submitting a final Report Form in e-protocol.

Consent form (when applicable) will be stamped and sent in a separate e-mail. Use only IRB approved copies of the consent forms, questionnaires, letters, advertisements etc. in your research.

Please contact the Human Research Protection Office if you have any further questions. Best wishes for a successful project.

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR STUDENTS

Consent Form for Students

Good Morning! I want to tell you about a research study that I am doing. A research study is a way to learn more about something. I would like to find out more about how the work of Paulo Freire/ Lorenzo Milani is still being applied and used in some places. You are being asked to join the study because you are a student in a school that appries and carries on the work of this important educator.

I want to communicate that, for three weeks, I will be attending this classroom and siting down here to learn and observe the lessons.

I will register some moments of the classroom with my voice recorder and I may ask if I can interview you to talk about your experiences of studying in this school.

Your parent will also receive a letter from me and will know about this study and that I am asking if you would like to be part of it.

I expect that the study will help other schools, students and teachers by talking about how the work of Paulo Freire and Lorenzo Milani is still used today.

With this study, we may learn something that will help other children with the benefits of being in a school that considers their pedagogies or special ways of teaching and treating students.

You do not have to join this study if you do not want to. It is up to you. You can also say okay now and change your mind later. All you have to do is tell me you want to stop. No one will be mad at you if you don't want to be in the study or if you join the study and change your mind later and ask to stop.

Before you say **yes or no** to being in this study, I can answer any questions you have. If you join the study, you can ask questions at any time. Just tell me that you have a question. If you want to be in this study, please write your name below.

_____ Participant signature	_____ Print name	_____ Date
_____ Participant-researcher signature	<u>Simone M. Gugliotta</u> Print name	_____ Date

APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS

Consent Form for Participation in a Research Study on Paulo Freire and Don Lorenzo Milani
University of Massachusetts, Amherst
Doctoral Student: Simone Maria Gugliotta

Principal Investigator: Simone Maria Gugliotta

Study Title: Paulo Freire & Don Milani: A Dialogue on Revolutionary Pedagogical Practices

1. What is this form?

This form is called a consent form. It will give you information about the study so you can make an informed decision about your child participation in this research study.

2. Who is eligible to participate?

Asked to participate in this study are students who attend schools that carry on Paulo Freire's and/or Don Lorenzo Milani's pedagogies and methods.

3. What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the dialogue on the role of formal education and pedagogical practices as political action from a comparative study of the scholarship of Brazilian Paulo Freire (1921-1997), and Italian Don Lorenzo Milani (1923-1967).

4. Where will the study take place and how long will it last?

The study is being conducted during the academic year of 2016-2019 through interviews, analysis of books, book chapters, and articles, and visits to two schools related to the two educators. If an interview with your child would be necessary for my study, it will happen in classroom and it will last 30 minutes or less.

5. What will your child be asked to do?

Your child may or not be asked to participate in an interview answering questions about the experience of working in some school activities that will be audio recorded. I will be also be observing and recording the student's classroom for three weeks. Your child may be asked to participate in a conversation about Freire and/or D. Milani, answering questions and sharing your experiences with their work. With your permission, I will audio record the interview. Please indicate below if you give me permission for recording this interview. ____ Yes ____ No

6. What are the benefits of being in this study?

There may be no direct benefit to you and your child for participating in this study, however the study will create a space for you to reflect on the legacies left by Freire and/or by D. Milani and how their pedagogies might have informed your personal, professional, and/or experiences.

7. What are the risks involved in this study?

The risks are absolutely minimal. The only possible inconvenience may be the time required for the interview(s). I will protect any information that could be related to your child identity (name of institution and context of your work with Freire/Milani) and any other information that could reveal her identity.

8. How will personal information be protected?

Your name, the children's names, names of institutions and other organization that you belong to, and other identifying information will be kept confidential unless you give me permission to use this information. Any computer files holding data about the study are password-protected and the computer itself kept in a secure location. I am the only one with access to the passwords. At the conclusion of the study, I may publish my findings. Information will be presented in summary and will not identify you in any publication or presentation, unless you request for me to use your identifying information. Dr. Maria José Botelho, my advisor, will have access to some of these data.

9. What if I have questions?

I will be happy to answer any questions you may have about this study. If you have further questions, or any research related problems, please contact me, Simone Gugliotta, at 413-xxx-xxxx and/or my advisor. Dr. Maria José Botelho's contact information is mbotelho@educ.umass.edu or 413-xxx-xxxx. If you have any questions concerning rights of a research subject, you may contact the University of Massachusetts Amherst Human Research Protection Office (HRPO) at (413) 545-3428 or humansubjects@ora.umass.edu

10. Can my child stop being in this study?

Your child does not have to be in this study if you both decide not to further participate. If your child agrees to participate, but later changes their mind, she may drop out of the study at any time. There are no penalties or consequences of any kind if you decide that you or your child does not want to participate.

11. Participant statement of voluntary consent

I have read this form and decided to give permission to my child to participate, if she wishes so. The general purpose and particulars of the study as well as possible hazards and inconveniences

have been explained to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw my permission at any time.

_____ Parent signature	_____ Print name: Simone M. Gugliotta	_____ Date
_____ Participant-researcher signature	_____ Print name	_____ Date

By signing above, I indicate that the parent of the participant has read and, to the best of my knowledge, understands the details contained in this document and has been given a copy.

_____ Name of the children obtaining consent (print name)	_____ Date:
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APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR ADULT PARTICIPANTS

Consent Form for Participation in a Research Study on Paulo Freire and Don Lorenzo Milani
University of Massachusetts, Amherst
Doctoral Student: Simone Maria Gugliotta

Principal Investigator: Simone Maria Gugliotta

Study Title: Paulo Freire & Don Milani: A Dialogue on Revolutionary Pedagogical Practices

1. What is this form?

This form is called a consent form. It will give you information about the study so you can make an informed decision about participation in this research study.

2. Who is eligible to participate?

Adult participants who have knowledge of and/or experience with the work of Paulo Freire and/or Don Milani, are eligible to participate.

3. What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this comparative study is to contribute to the dialogue on the role of pedagogical practices as political action within formal educational contexts. These practices are based on the scholarship of Brazilian Paulo Freire (1921-1997), and Italian Don Lorenzo Milani (1923-1967).

4. Where will the study take place and how long will it last?

The study is being conducted during 2016-2017 Academic Year through interviews and critical reviews of books, book chapters, and articles, and visits to important sites relevant to the work of the two educators.

The interview will last one hour or less and will take place in a location that is convenient for you. I will meet you in the place chosen by you.

5. What will you be asked to do?

You will be asked to participate in a conversation about Freire and/or D. Milani, answering questions and sharing your experiences with their work. With your permission, I will audio record the interview. The audio recordings will be stored for about five years and then will be deleted after that time.

Please indicate below if you give me the permission for recording this interview.

_____ Yes _____ No

6. What are the benefits of being in this study?

There may be no direct benefit to you for participating in this study, however the study will create a space for you to reflect on the legacies left by Freire and/or by D. Milani and how their pedagogies might have informed your personal and/or professional experiences.

7. What are the risks involved in this study?

The risks are absolutely minimal. The only possible inconvenience may be the time required for the interview(s). It may be possible, based on the context of what you say that you will be reidentified due to the context of the interview material given the relatively small number of people that match my subject population.

8. How will personal information be protected?

Your name, the names of institutions and other organization that you belong to, and other identifying information will be kept confidential unless you give me permission to use this information. Any computer files holding data about the study are password-protected and the computer itself is kept in a secure location. I am the only one with access to the passwords. At the conclusion of the study, I may publish my findings. Information will be presented in summary and will not identify you in any publication or presentation, unless you request for me to use your identifying information. Dr. Maria José Botelho, my advisor, will have access to some of these data.

9. What if I have questions?

I will be happy to answer any questions you may have about this study. If you have further questions, or have any research-related problems, please contact me, Simone Gugliotta, at gugliott@umass.edu or 413-xxx-xxxx and/or my advisor, Dr. Maria José Botelho, at mbotelho@educ.umass.edu or 413-xxx-xxxx. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research subject, you may contact the University of Massachusetts Amherst Human Research Protection Office (HRPO) at (413) 545-3428 or humansubjects@ora.umass.edu.

10. Can I stop being in this study?

If you agree to participate, but later change your mind, you may drop out of the study at any time. There are no penalties or consequences of any kind if you decide that you no longer want to participate.

11. Participant statement of voluntary consent

I have read this form and decided that I will participate in the project described above. The general purpose and particulars of the study as well as possible hazards and

inconveniences have been explained to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw participation and permission at any time.

____I give the researcher permission to use my full name and other identifying information.

____I do not give the researcher permission to use my name and any other identifying information.

_____	_____	_____
Participant signature:	Print name:	Date:

_____	_____	_____
Researcher signature	Print name	Date:

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW GUIDING QUESTIONS

Questions for Interview

UMass Amherst

Paulo Freire and Don Lorenzo Milani: A Dialogue

Project – researcher: Simone Maria Gugliotta

College of Education - Concentration: Language, Literacy, and Culture

Questions to interviewees:

- 1 – In what capacity did you work with Don Milani / Paulo Freire? (Personally, research etc)
- 2 – Can you talk a little about what he was like and his work (Freire/Milani)?
- 3 – Please describe the School of Barbiana. Tell me about the teachers, children, classrooms, materials, relationships with families and community?
- 4 – What was his relation to and/or thoughts about politics? (Freire and Milani)
- 5 – Please talk about the impact of his book “Letter to a Teacher” (Milani) / “Pedagogy of the Oppressed” (Freire).
- 6 – In what ways does your association promote the work of Freire / Milani?
- 7 – In which way did Catholicism influence his educational projects (Freire and Milani)?
- 8 – What was Freire’s/Milani’s position on women’s work in education? Please talk about Freire/Milani’s ideas regarding feminism and women's emancipation?
- 9- What influence did his exile (Freire or Milani) have on his scholarship? On the communities he worked with?
- 10 - In your opinion, what is his legacy to the current education studies?

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